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Present Day Theology

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

LEWIS FRENCH STEARNS was born at Newburyport, Mass., on March 10, 1847. His father was the Rev. Jonathan French Stearns, then pastor of the Federal Street Presbyterian Church in that ancient town. The maiden name of his mother was Anna S. Prentiss. He was the second of three children. The eldest, Seargent Prentiss Stearns, Consul-General at Montreal under President Arthur, is now living in that city, and his sister Annie is the wife of Dr. Austin Scott, President of Rutgers College, New Brunswick, N. J. He had good reason to rejoice in his parentage. It made him heir, along several lines, to the oldest and best religious life of New England. On his father's side it allied him with a ministerial family noted through successive generations for admirable personal qualities, piety, and wide influence. Dr. O. W. Holmes, in his poem "The School-Boy," described it as

— a saintly race that never could,
From youth to age, be anything but good.

On his mother's side he inherited some of the pleasantest, as well as worthiest, memories of Cape Cod and the Old Colony, and of Maine, in the eighteenth and first third of the nineteenth century. All the roots of his being ran back into the rich Puritan and Pilgrim soil of the seventeenth century.

In the autumn of 1849 his father accepted a call to the First Presbyterian Church of Newark, N. J. Here Lewis spent his boyhood, and this was the home of his student years. Newark at that time was a leading centre, in New Jersey, of Presbyterianism, as also of social culture, professional talents, public spirit, and successful manufacturing industries. Its history was full of honored names. The First Church especially abounded, both then and through all its previous annals, in men prominent alike in Church and State. It was a good environment for the growth of solid virtues. And Lewis showed, while still a child, a keen susceptibility to the best influences about him. He was marked, even as a little boy, by striking individual traits. The observing eye of his aunt, the author of "Stepping Heavenward," was early attracted to him, and he soon won her special affection—an affection that ripened into a life-long friendship. Her letters contain frequent allusions to him. Here is a passage from one to his mother, dated Newark, August 14, 1851. Lewis was then four and a half years old, and his aunt occupied the parsonage, while his parents were absent on a journey :

All is going on well at your house. Luly is perfectly well and the very best of boys, and you would smile to see him in his papa's place at the breakfast-table, while I occupy yours, each of us as grave as a judge. He comes up every morning and waits on me down to breakfast, looking as neat as a pink.

A few weeks later, in another letter, she pictures him as bursting with joyous excitement and racing "like mad," with a little cousin, up and down a Sound steamer. His brother thus depicts some of his traits as a boy and a student :

His first real preparation for college began at the Newark Academy, then, as now, the leading school in Newark. Here he

worked hard and showed that aptitude for acquirement and painstaking thoroughness in his studies which afterward so distinguished him. He mastered everything as he went along, and had a relish for study for study's sake. Besides the regular curriculum, which consisted of the ordinary English branches and the rudiments of Latin and Greek, he took up of his own volition and outside of school the study of German and French, and of experimental chemistry. For the latter he fitted up a laboratory in the attic of the old parsonage where we then lived, and carried on such experiments and investigations as the limited means at his disposal would permit. He constructed a rough camera out of a cigar-box and the lens of a magic lantern, and astonished us by taking some very fair photographs of neighboring objects. It was at this time, and I mention it as an interesting development of his many-sided character, that he meditated the invention of a new language, and with infinite care and patience proceeded to establish for it an alphabet and grammar. Of course this task was, after a while, and before it had taken complete form, abandoned, but it showed the bent of his mind and his confidence in his inventive faculty. About this time, too, he edited a weekly paper, which was neatly written out in manuscript, and read before the school. A little later on he printed copies of them on a little hand-press which had been given to him, and distributed them among his mates.

He was very fond of music and no mean musician, although mainly self-taught, playing fairly well on both the piano and the flute, and when his eyes first began to trouble him and interfere with his work, whiling away many a weary hour with one or the other.

He had a peculiar affection for cats, and they seemed drawn to him, and as far back as I can remember he had one or more of these pets attached to him, and his whimsical humor showed itself in the odd names he gave to them.

He was the soul of the domestic circle, interesting in conversation, quick at repartee, full of wit, with a keen sense of the ridiculous and a rare art of putting things, and the idol of the children. Wherever he was, there was sure to be fun and frolic.

The home at the old Newark parsonage was one of almost ideal comfort and sweetness. All gracious influ-

ences conspired to bless it. Strength and beauty were in it. The father was an eminently wise as well as good man ; cultured, social, public-spirited, of commanding influence, and a model of pastoral fidelity. The mother, a woman of rare attractions and force of character, shed brightness upon all about her. An aged and saintly grandmother, his brother and sister, to all of whom Lewis was deeply attached, completed this Christian home. Its hospitable doors were constantly opening also to welcome kindred and friends from New York and New England, whose visits and conversation formed no small element in the education of Lewis Stearns. His uncle, President Stearns, of Amherst College, was one of these visitors ; and another, coming much oftener, and laden always with the good cheer of learned, as also of unlearned and merry talk, was Henry Boynton Smith, of New York, Professor in Union Theological Seminary. Among the early and most intimate friends of Lewis was Richard Wayne Parker, Esq., of Newark, who gives the following recollections of him :

We were brought up together in Newark. For several years he was my classmate at the Academy. In 1862 he went to Andover to study at Phillips Academy, and I followed him the next year. We entered Princeton together and were close companions during all the college course, graduating in 1867. In the classics he was the undisputed first of his class. For a year or more we were at the Columbia Law School. In 1871 I joined him in Europe, and we travelled three months together—together night and day. If anybody knew him well, I did. Even as a boy he thought, studied, and acted for himself ; and he seemed to feel and realize the duties, ambitions, problems, and mysteries of life with an intensity that marked all he said or did. He had a natural earnestness of character, united to an almost feminine sensibility that rendered the simplest situation grave to him, in its surroundings and possibilities. I never knew anyone who seemed to me to hate evil as he did. I have re-read my diary of 1871, and noted the

record in it of his horror of Carlsbad gambling, of European morals, and of all those foreign customs and ways abroad that are so contrary to our American ideas of true living. I have always regretted that he gave up the bar. Great as he was in theology, I believe his peculiar gifts of mind and character qualified him to be greater still in the law. The first and foremost thing about him was his love of truth. He made early and strong friendships; nor was one of them ever broken.

Early in 1869 his mother died, and not long after he decided to devote himself to the ministry of the Gospel. His theological studies were pursued at Princeton Seminary, 1869-70; at the Universities of Berlin and Leipzig, 1870-71; and at Union Seminary, in the city of New York, 1871-72. In October, 1873, he was ordained and installed over the Presbyterian church at Norwood, N. J. During his short ministry in this place he greatly endeared himself to the people. His immediate successor testifies to the strong impression which his manly and Christian qualities—especially his pastoral kindness, sympathy, and gentle ways—left upon the little parish. Many years later I myself witnessed a touching illustration of the enduring power and tenderness of this impression. In 1876 he accepted a call to the Professorship of History and Belles-lettres, in Albion College, at Albion, Mich. Resigning in 1879, on account of a serious affection of the eyes, he returned to his father's house, where he spent the next year in varied literary work, trying his hand at a novel for one thing, and in learning the expert use of a typewriter.* I was brought into very close intimacy with him at this

* The story (writes a friend) bore the title of "Camp Out," and was based upon his own experiences in the Adirondacks. It was charmingly written and would, no doubt, have attracted many readers by its combination of fancy and imagination, by its delicate humor, and by its bright pictures of nature. The MS. had just been sent to the publisher when the call to Bangor came.

row and mechanical. Its theodicy failed just where it was most needed. It placed the doctrine of election, which is true and scriptural as the practical corollary of the divine efficiency in regeneration and sanctification, at the forefront and subordinated everything to it. In it the elect were everything, and everything was for the elect; but the new theology finds another centre. It is fitting that Christ, who is the historical centre of the Christian religion, as he is the vital centre of his church, should be the centre of the theological system. About him all the truths and doctrines group themselves.

His ten years at Bangor, both in the seminary and in the religious and social life of the town, were marked by varied activity as well as ever-growing influence and usefulness. Sailing up the Penobscot for the first time, on a lovely October day, he was captivated by the beauty of the place, and soon became very fond of it. Early in 1882 its attractions were greatly enhanced by his marriage to Miss Elizabeth Mann Benson. This auspicious event allied him also by fraternal ties to his colleague in the faculty, Professor Sewall. The new home brought him constant help and gladness, and called into play charming domestic qualities. The recollections of my repeated visits to it are delightful. "Life broadens and grows more beautiful in every way, as I go forward into it," he said. As husband, father, friend, and neighbor he seemed to me one of the sweetest, truest, and most companionable of men. What a picture, for example, was the sight of him leading his little daughter by the hand through the fine seminary grounds! In walking with him along the streets of Bangor I observed that everybody appeared to know and to like him. He was a special favorite of his neighbors, the late ex-Vice President Hamlin and Chief-Justice Appleton. In this respect he resembled his famous uncle, S. S. Prentiss, whose society and talk fascinated old men of wisdom and

culture quite as much as his oratory electrified the common people. Nor was Professor Stearns's usefulness confined to Bangor. His influence, both as theologian and preacher, was soon felt throughout Maine. It was his mother's native State; old kindred and friends of hers met him wherever he went; while interest in the seminary and his seminary work deepened more and more into a lively interest in the prosperity of the churches with which from the first the institution had been very closely associated.

Early in 1890 Professor Stearns delivered a course of lectures in Union Seminary on the Ely foundation. He was not a little perplexed in selecting a subject for this course. In a letter to me, dated May 29, 1888, he wrote :

Do tell me if you have any more suggestions about the subject for the Ely lectures. As I think the matter over, without being able to get any help from reading, my mind gravitates as before to a doctrinal subject. What do you think of "The Argument for the Truth of Christianity derived from the Doctrine of the Atonement?" If the atonement is—as undoubtedly it is—the central doctrine of Christianity, so that the cross is not only the symbol of our faith but the exponent of its inmost and most essential meaning, then there ought to be in it a stronger evidence for the truth of the whole system than that which can come from any other source. Instead of maintaining a continual attitude of defence respecting this central doctrine, acting as if we ourselves doubted its reasonableness, we ought, like Paul, to run the standard of the cross up to the masthead and draw our great proof of the truth of Christianity from "Christ crucified," even though it seems at first "unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Greeks foolishness." If we can show that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men," then we base our evidences upon a solid rock. I recognize the difficulty of all this, especially the difficulty of mediating between the Christian consciousness and the natural consciousness with regard to a doctrine which is in a sense esoteric; but I can't help

thinking that I see light with regard both to the matter and the form of the argument. Quite likely I should fail, but the very attempt would open the way for some one else. Sooner or later the argument must be brought into prominence. The old external evidences from miracles and prophecy are now inadequate; the popular thought of our day treats them with scant respect. The argument from Christian experience is impregnable, but it is of limited applicability. Christianity has got to stand or fall by its essential doctrines. We have got to show that in the moral and spiritual sphere—to say nothing of the lower spheres—they constitute the only practical working hypothesis, that is, the only hypothesis that will correlate and explain the facts. I seem to see a renewal of Constantine's vision, with the flaming cross pointing the way to the apologetics of the future, *Ἐν τούτῳ νίκα!* The doctrine of the atonement is the doctrine of the cross.

He finally chose as his theme "The Evidence of Christian Experience," which he treated with such skill, learning, and spiritual discernment as deeply to impress all who heard him. While preparing the Ely lectures his eyes gave him constant trouble, and would have forced him to abandon the task, had not the eyes of his wife been ever at his service. Alluding to this trouble in the letter just quoted he adds: "It is the experience of Tantalus to live in the midst of books and not to be able to read them. Yet I doubt not the Lord has some good end in view in appointing me this discipline." The discipline was at times severe, and for more than twenty years imposed upon him painful limitations both in study and in his work. But he bore it bravely and without murmuring. His faith in the ruling hand of God, touching all things that concerned his life, whether great or small, was unswerving.

In the early summer of 1890 Professor Stearns received a unanimous call from the Union Seminary in the city of New York to the chair of Systematic Theology, made vacant by the resignation of Dr. Shedd. After

long deliberation and sharp mental struggles, he declined the call on the ground that he could not take the seminary pledge. A few extracts from his letters will explain the attitude of his mind on this point. The first was written in November, 1889; the other two were written after he had received the call to New York.

What a time you are having about revision! It seems as if the storm-centre had left Congregationalism and were concentrated over Presbyterianism. I have expected the question to come up sooner or later, but did not suppose that the demand for revision would be so extensive and loud. I trust you will do the work thoroughly and not by halves. For my own part, I have not so much objection to the Westminster Confession as some have. But it is a millstone around the neck of any denomination, such a system of doctrine as that. It is not simply its Calvinism but its dogmatism all through. Haven't we got out of leading-strings yet, and are we not to be trusted to be evangelical? I used to feel the pressure when I was a Presbyterian pastor. It did not satisfy me to know that I was only expected to take the Confession for substance of doctrine. I am a great deal more orthodox now than then, and I ascribe it largely to the entire freedom of thought I have had here among the Congregationalists.

It is not that my theology would be unacceptable to the directors and constituency of Union Seminary, but that my conscience will not allow me to subscribe in what would be for me a strained and non-natural sense. If revision were consummated the case would be different. Meantime it is my misfortune (if anything that is according to God's will is a misfortune), to receive this very honorable and generous call in the period of transition, too early to share in the benefits of revision, and too late to ignore what is involved in subscription as the Confession stands at present. . . . I am not an Arminian, but I am not a Calvinist in the sense in which I have supposed the Westminster Confession to be Calvinistic.

What troubles me about the Confession is not the *ipsissima verba* but the *system*. It seems to me that the whole Confession is based upon the view that salvation is placed within the reach of only a part of mankind. To the rest, though they have a larger

or smaller measure of common grace, the power to accept Christ is never given. This doctrine, if I rightly apprehend the subject, dominates the whole system of the Confession.

If not ready to accept all his conclusions on the subject, I none the less admired the manly spirit and the high sense of duty which governed his own decision in the case.*

He resumed his labors at Bangor without regret, for his own conscience had closed the door to the wider sphere offered him in New York. Bangor, too, had for him its special attractions. The students admired and loved him; he was happy in the confidence and affection of his colleagues; and he liked the theological quiet and seclusion of the place. I have never known a man so able and highly trained who troubled himself less about position or reputation in the world. "I have not (he wrote me) so far as I know, an ambition outside of the work God has given me here, but I have a strong ambition to do that well."

About this time he was requested to write a paper on "The Present Direction of Theological Thought in the Congregational Churches of the United States," to be read by him before the International Congregational Council at London, in July, 1891, as a representative of Bangor Seminary. Owing to the state of his health he at first declined the appointment; but at the urgent desire of the trustees of the seminary he reconsidered the matter and consented to go. His paper was listened to with the greatest interest and received unstinted praise

* While the question of accepting the call to New York was pending, he made a visit to my summer home in Vermont, in order to meet there President Hastings of Union Seminary, and to confer with us on the subject. It was our last interview with him, and left upon us both an ineffaceable impression of the noble sincerity, tenderness, and strength of his Christian character.

from all quarters. Its effect is thus described by Dr. N. G. Clark, the honored Secretary of the American Board, who was present on the occasion :

He appeared on the platform a comparatively unknown man ; he left it standing side by side with Dale and Fairbairn—a recognized leader. Though taking no further prominent part in the services, his paper was referred to again and again in the subsequent discussions. We doubt if any paper was more influential in affecting the thought and sentiment of the Council. It was needed to give form and proportion to the religious sentiment of our English friends, and to hold them fast to the great fundamental truths of Christianity while revolting from excessive dogma. This was a valuable service rendered to the English delegates in the Council. Professor Stearns helped the American delegation to realize, as never before, just the progress we had made on more conservative lines. Some one was needed to do just what he did, to represent the progressive conservatism of the great body of reverent Christian thinkers, not only of our denomination but the best Christian thought of all.*

At the close of the Council he, together with his wife, made a journey to Norway, and then passed several weeks in Dresden. Soon after reaching home he was elected a corporate member of the American Board, and appointed preacher for its next Annual Meeting. His last literary labor was HENRY BOYNTON SMITH, which he had been requested to prepare for the "American Religious Leader Series." It appeared soon after his death, and was received with much favor. It is an excellent piece of biographical work—bright, discriminating, and true to the life.

On February 9, 1892, after a brief illness, Professor Stearns, then in the forty-fifth year of his age, passed suddenly away from earth. His last hours were full of the peace which comes of humble submission to God's will and childlike trust in the Divine Saviour. Once and

* The London address will be found at the end of this volume.

again he said, "I die in the old faith." Not since the triumphant departure of Edward Payson, in 1827, also in his forty-fifth year, had a greater loss befallen the Congregational churches of Maine. Nor was the loss confined to Maine or to Congregationalism; it was keenly felt by Christian scholars in all New England and throughout the country. A genuine theologian, fully equipped for his work by rich gifts of both nature and grace, is a rare product of our own or any other soil. And Lewis French Stearns had just come to be recognized as such a theologian. The tributes to his memory were truly surprising for their number and quality; they came from far and near and were all of a piece.* Those who knew him best admired and loved him most; but none really knew him without admiring and loving him. He was every inch a man; and his whole manhood, while seasoned through and through with the sweet charities of the Gospel, was inspired also by very resolute convictions of truth and justice. He hated all the unfair and wrongful means, which even good men are sometimes tempted to use in the furtherance of what they deem righteous ends. He held it as much a sin to bear false witness against an infidel as against a Christian; against a Unitarian or Roman Catholic as against the most orthodox Protestant. He was explicit and decided in his opinions about parties and schools and individuals; nor in expressing them did he hesitate to make free use of the weapons of wit, and even ridicule, which he knew well how to wield; but whether advocate or assailant,

* That of his colleagues will be found in the very thoughtful and discriminating Memorial Address by Professor F. B. Denio, printed in the Andover Review for July, 1892. Not less striking were the tributes of trustees of the Seminary and old friends, in Maine and elsewhere, which almost filled the whole number of The Christian Mirror for March 12, 1892, and also the Word and Work for March, 1892.

he held fast to his own veracity and honor. And this fine quality, which marked his personal character, pervaded his teaching, his writings, and all his influence as a Christian scholar. I never knew one more ingenuous and whole-hearted in the inquiry of truth. In this "love-making or wooing" of truth, as Lord Bacon calls it, his will, his conscience, and his best affections were not only in full unison with the intellectual energy, they were part and parcel of it.

In argument his power lay very much in the patience and scrupulous care with which he studied, as well as the fairness with which he recognized, the strength of his opponent's position. It came also in part, as I think, from the sense of humor, which was one of his marked characteristics and led him to look at things in a broad and generous way. This quick sense of humor enlivened his whole home-life and was a special charm of his familiar talk. It relieved the intensity of his mental action, and served to lubricate the wheels of high-wrought feeling and conviction. Both in the natural and in the spiritual spheres how much the cause of truth owes to this genial quality! The same traits that marked him as a seeker after truth and as a Christian scholar, gave him his power as a teacher. The testimony of his pupils on this point is most interesting. A member of the Class of '82 writes :

In all he said we discerned the humble spirit of a sincere seeker after truth, striving to make his own deeper thought and experience of aid to us in forming clear and accurate opinions. He never seemed dogmatic ; but we had no doubt of the positiveness of his views. As we learned to know him we felt that his faith was firmly buttressed by conviction of truth won in his own mental and spiritual conflicts. So conscientious was he in allowing full weight to the ideas of others, that some who heard him but seldom may have feared that he granted too much to those who

differed from him in religious views ; but we who sat at his feet, day after day, realized that his Christian courtesy was joined with unyielding loyalty to the great truths for whose promotion the seminary was founded. Under his direction theology seemed no longer a dull consideration of dogmatic systems of the past, but a living study of practical bearing upon the life and thought of the present. He was more than a wise teacher. Behind his office and shown in all his official as well as private intercourse with us was the spirit of a devoted Christian, who felt in his own experience the helpful power of the truth he taught.

A member of the Class of '84 writes :

I entered the seminary after a painful and protracted period of doubt on almost every point of revealed religion. From the first I felt a peculiar helpfulness in the class-room of Professor Stearns. And this help did not arise alone from the fact that he taught theology ; it came from the man himself. Whether correctly or not, I felt that here was a man who himself had known doubts and had fought through them to the truth. That he had settled all questions that vex the scholars, I did not think, nor do I now. He was keenly sensitive to all the questions of the higher criticism ; he had more than a passive sympathy with newer statements of religious truth, and his mind was plainly open to the entrance of new light. I should say that he had known much of impatience with the older and sterner and more dogmatic theology, and had not swung back quite to it at that time. I do not know that he ever did ; yet I have evidence from all later classes that in every successive year of his work he showed signs of increasing willingness to accept the old definitions, in some cases where the newer theories did not supply definitions which seemed to him to fit the facts. As an illustration, the anthropomorphic representations of God were very distasteful to him in our time ; yet it was told me that later he did not hesitate to assert that God was really "angry" with the wicked, at least was what no other word would so nearly express. This representation to me, was in harmony with the impression I received of him as a man of singularly open mind, never stagnant, never satisfied with present visions of truth, always eager for larger visions, and for statements that would exactly fit the facts. He could not from his nature

help seeking for scientific accuracy in statement; when he did not find it, he never pretended to have found it.

It was this fact in his intellectual make-up, which made him the farthest from a dogmatic teacher. He was so scrupulous in his fairness, that he sometimes seemed to have no opinion himself in his effort to let us see all opinions; indeed, as I have suggested, it is probable that he did not feel so sure on some points as some teachers; he was himself a student with us, with wonderful reach of vision, grasp of all the elements in the problem, and an analytic faculty which was keen as a Damascus blade. If he did not tell us where the truth lay, he never left us in doubt as to where it could not lie. This element in his method was of untold value to me, in my then condition, and laid me under a lasting debt of gratitude to Professor Stearns.

A member of the Class of '86 writes :

In the class-room, in the prayer-meeting, in the pulpit he always helped me, but more than by what he said, he has inspired me by what he *was*. By his unremitting toil, his unassuming spirit, his fortitude in the time of tribulation, he has fulfilled the prophecy that a *man* shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

He was practical, he was spiritual. I felt that he was near to me and yet far above me. Many times as he has entered the class-room or walked through the seminary grounds, I have said to myself: "He is communing with God."

"There are, in this loud, stunning tide
Of human care and crime.
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime :
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusty lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

One more extract from these grateful tributes must suffice; it speaks for the Class of '93.

It seems impossible in a few words to say anything at all adequate about that character which was so bright, so many-sided,

and withal so simple, so transparent. In the class-room or out of it, in society or in the home, his bearing was always that of a refined Christian gentleman. He never varied, he never changed, except to show more and more to those who knew him the beauty of his richly endowed nature. Great as our loss is, yet our gain is greater in having been the last class to sit under his instruction, and to receive the parting benediction of a life that was so full of God and Christ. His dying message to us was in these words: "Tell my dear Middle Class that nothing is of importance to them except to know Jesus Christ as their divine Lord and Master."

We who so recently were accustomed to meet him day after day can testify that the ineffable charm of his character lay in the fact that he lived so near to Christ. His Saviour was a living, ever-present Saviour. He drank deeply of the water of life, and always seemed to be overflowing with the great, joyous truths revealed by God in Christ. There was something spontaneous in every word that he uttered. The prayer, offered at the beginning of each recitation, never failed by its simple directness to impress us with the solemnity of the work before us. And so everywhere, whether in the class-room or prayer-meeting, his strong, earnest words came from the abundance of the heart. His words, but more than all, his spirit, inspired us with more love for our Saviour, with a higher conception of the responsibility of our calling, with a more fervid longing in the prayer, "Thy kingdom come." He taught us that breadth of view was to be obtained only by prayer, and by a deep, searching study of God's Word. In a word, by his own unselfish life and his teachings he helped us to realize the noble possibilities of an ideal Christian manhood.

The subject of this brief sketch was very dear to me both for his mother's sake and his own. Had he been my son or younger brother, I could hardly have loved him better. His letters, always bright, scholarly, affectionate, and full of high aspirations, were to me for years a solace and refreshment. Intercourse and talk with him revived the pleasantest memories of his father and of Henry B. Smith, his father's friend and my own. I never doubted that he would survive me a score or more of years, and would yet render invaluable aid to the

good old cause, which in their day and generation those two admirable men served so well. But *visum aliter Deo*. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways. He knows when it is best to call His children home to Himself. It is a very blessed thing to follow Christ by faith here in time ; but how much more blessed still to see Him face to face, and to follow Him, whithersoever He goeth, in the life everlasting !

The present volume was written three or four years before Dr. Stearns's death. It aims to set forth and discuss in popular form the leading doctrines of Christianity. Had the author's life been spared the work would doubtless have been carefully revised by him, if not rewritten. Just before his death he directed that the MS. should be submitted to his brother-in-law, Dr. Sewall, of Bangor. Dr. Fisher, of New Haven, and myself ; and that, if we so advised, it should be given to the public. The following letter from Dr. Fisher expresses our common feeling and judgment :

NEW HAVEN, December 14, 1892.

MY DEAR DR. PRENTISS : My first particular knowledge of Professor Stearns was obtained from the reading of his Inaugural Address at Bangor. The address struck me at once as having "the true ring." Here, I said to myself, is a theologian who looks at things with an open eye, sees clearly what are the fundamental questions, and is capable of bringing to the discussion of them a sincere Christian spirit, and a refined, cultivated intellect. His subsequent publications have fully borne out this first impression. His work on the "Evidence of Christian Experience" is one of the most noted theological productions of our time. The learning at the basis of it is unobtrusive, but broad and accurate ; the reasoning is careful ; the religious sentiment that pervades the book is deep and genuine ; the style is appropriate. The paper which Professor Stearns read at the Congregational Council in London was a difficult one to prepare. He had to touch upon

questions which were warmly controverted among Congregationalists in this country. He spoke with frankness, without the slightest attempt to take refuge in ambiguities, and yet he spoke so fairly and judiciously as to win universal commendation. In his life of Professor Henry B. Smith, Professor Stearns illustrated his admirable qualifications as a theological critic. There is thorough insight and genial appreciation. Yet the author's reverent regard for the character and teachings of the subject of the biography, subtracts nothing from the independence of his judgment. Wherever he finds occasion for dissent, he does not hesitate to express it.

Professor Stearns was one of the few men among us, still comparatively young, who took up from choice and pursued with acknowledged ability and success, the branch of dogmatic theology. Of late, exegesis and history, along with Biblical theology, have exerted an unwonted attraction. Professor Stearns did not fail to lay a strong foundation by making himself well acquainted with these favorite departments of study. But his chosen field was dogmatics. He made it his purpose to set forth, in a systematic form, and to defend on scriptural and rational grounds, the doctrines of the Christian faith. This circumstance renders his departure from life, at an age when his task was incomplete, a loss which is most keenly felt. A conservative, he was, nevertheless, the foe of *obscurantism*. He appreciated the value of that reasonable liberty of religious thought, without which intellectual life in the church languishes, and progress in the understanding of Christianity is impossible.

The opportunity which I have had to peruse, in manuscript, the work of Professor Stearns, which is now to be given to the press, has convinced me that, although it is not all that he would have made it to be, it deserves to be published. The comparative lack of catechetical instruction in families and churches in these days is insufficiently supplied by Sunday-schools. There is a need of works that shall present in a clear and orderly manner the doctrines of the Christian system, and the grounds that justify belief in them. This benefit, I am persuaded, the proposed volume will confer.

I always thought of Professor Stearns, while he was living, with respect and affection, and now that he has gone, I cherish for him a tender regard. But you, who knew him so well, are best qualified to do justice to his personal traits.

Very sincerely yours,

GEORGE P. FISHER.

PRESENT DAY THEOLOGY

I.

THE NATURAL REVELATION OF GOD

Is there a God? and can He be known? These are the two great questions which challenge us, as we stand upon the threshold of theology, and demand an answer. They are questions which the majority of men never ask. The unsophisticated mind, whether in heathen or Christian lands, believes implicitly in the existence of God or of the gods, and has some conception of the divine nature. It is only when men begin to philosophize that they become sceptics.

It is our lot to live in an age and a land where philosophizing is all too familiar. About us, on every side, are those who deny or call in question the two fundamental facts of religion and theology, the existence of God and the ability of men to know Him. We must therefore be ready to give a reason for the faith that is in us. It will not be enough to declare that religion is universal and that the postulate of religion is God. We must marshal our proofs and justify our faith to the reason of our fellow-men. This much even the sceptic has a right to demand of us.

What, then, is the proof that God exists and that He may be known? Paul has declared it—"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of

him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. i. 19, 20). We know *that* God is and *what* He is because He reveals both His existence and His nature to every man, even to those who do not accept the revelation. Over against the atheist's denial and the agnostic's ignorance we set the Apostle's "what may be known of God," τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ over against τὸ ἄγνωστον.

The object of this chapter is to set forth the proof of God's existence and the knowledge of His nature which are furnished by His universal revelation of Himself.

I. First, then, the proof of God's existence is the revelation of Himself which He has made.

1. Let us stop a moment to inquire what is meant by revelation. And here the etymology of the word shall be our guide. It is from the Latin *revelare*, to draw back a veil. Revelation is God's unveiling of Himself, His withdrawal of the curtain which hides Him from men. Mistaken conceptions obscure the simple idea. We have been used to think of revelation as the communication of a system of doctrine or of a moral and religious code. Now, undoubtedly these ideas are included in the complete conception of revelation. But in its highest and truest sense the term implies not so much the giving of knowledge *about* God, as the knowledge of God Himself. It implies an activity on the side of God and a corresponding receptivity on the side of men. God manifests Himself. He makes Himself known. Men know Him because He comes near to them and causes them to realize His presence.

2. To proceed, when we prove God's existence from His self-revelation, we do not employ any unfamiliar or illegitimate method of reasoning. In the same way we prove the existence of the three other great realities which share with the knowledge of God the possession of

our consciousness. How do we know that the world exists? How do we know that the invisible spirits of our fellow-men exist? How do we know that we ourselves exist? The answer is simple. We know the existence of the world, our fellow-men, and ourselves because they manifest themselves as realities to our consciousness—in other words, because they reveal themselves to us. All knowledge is in a true sense revelation.

Look at the external world. It appears as a permanent and unchanging element in our consciousness. We cannot think or act except upon the assumption of its reality. It resists every effort to reduce it to a merely subjective impression. I cannot doubt that there is real world there. I know it because it makes itself known to me. And this truth, which is reached by a psychological process, is confirmed by the light which physical science throws upon the matter. It tells us that nothing in nature is passive. Everything is manifesting itself, and all that is needed to turn its manifestation into a revelation is the presence of a receptive soul. You see before you a lump of dead matter, metal or stone. You see it? What does that mean? It means that this seemingly inert mass is instinct with activity, and that it manifests itself to you through that activity. The shivering molecules set in motion invisible waves in the æther, which break upon the retina of your eye like the surf upon the beach and carry inward to your soul the knowledge of the object. There is nothing in the external world that has not this power of revelation or manifestation. Otherwise it would be to all intents and purposes a nonentity. There is truth in Leibnitz's maxim, that what does not act does not exist, "*qui non agit non existit*."

Or consider our knowledge of our fellow-men. This, too, is an indestructible element of consciousness. We know their existence because they reveal themselves to us. Outwardly there is nothing to distinguish them

from the material things by which they are surrounded. The spirit is invisible. The body is not the man. The gestures, the looks, the words are only symbols or mediums. But through words and acts, as well as in ways which betoken a nearer contact of spirit with spirit, and which science fails to explain, they reveal themselves to us, and we can no more doubt the reality of their existence than we can that of the world.

And so of our knowledge of ourselves. Who questions the existence of the self-conscious, self-determining Ego or I? When we wish to express the highest degree of assurance respecting anything, we say, "I am as certain of it as I am of my own existence." But how does self make itself known? It reveals itself in consciousness. I know that I exist because there is the I revealing itself to me, myself to myself.

Now not different is it with the proof of the divine existence. We know that God exists because He reveals Himself to us. It is a fact which may stand as sure to us as our self-existence or the existence of our fellow-men and of the world. We use in its behalf precisely the same kind of proof. There in our consciousness are manifestations of the divine. When Herbert Spencer says that the existence of God is a "necessary datum of consciousness," he concedes all that the theist needs as the starting-point of his argument. It is a curious fact that the philosophers who deny or call in question the divine existence always do the same by some, if not all, of the other three realities. The four stand or fall together. They are the four pillars upon which the edifice of human certainty rests.

3. We pass now to consider the particular arguments for the divine existence. After our discussion of the nature of the proof, we shall not be at a loss to discover these. Every mode of the divine self-revelation will furnish us with an argument. Light and heat and gravi-

tation are all modes of the sun's manifestation, and they are all proofs of its existence. If anyone were rash enough to deny that there is a sun, I should refute his assertion by presenting these and like evidences. So if anyone is rash enough to deny the existence of God, the disproof will lie in the exhibition of the various modes in which God reveals Himself to us.

We may accordingly distinguish six different ways in which the revelation of God comes to us, which furnish us with as many lines of argument for His existence. God makes Himself known in the experiences of the religious life, in conscience and the moral order of the world, in the existence and activities of the human soul, in the rationality and design evident in the world, in the existence of the world itself as an effect and dependent form of being, and in the necessary idea of the Absolute as it appears in every soul. These modes of the divine self-revelation give us what the theologians call the Religious, the Moral, the Psychological, the Teleological, the Cosmological and the Ontological arguments. Let us, so far as our time will permit, consider each.

(1) The religious proof is that which is in some respects more readily applied than any other. No learning or mental discipline is necessary in order to understand it. It is open at once to the savage and the civilized man, to the heathen and the Christian, to the child and the person of mature age. It is the proof derived from personal experience in the religious life of the reality and power of God. In the practical exercises of religion men find themselves in spiritual contact with God, and know that they are in such contact. A certainty of God's existence is awakened which to him who possesses it has the highest degree of validity. The divine presence is manifested not only in the intellect but in the feelings and the will. And just in proportion as a man yields himself to the divine influence does this assurance of God's existence burn with

a pure and steady flame upon the altar of his soul. If we believe that God works in every soul, we shall see reason to think that this proof to some extent influences every man, so that even the professed atheist is in his better moments open to an argument drawn from the experiences of his own inner life. But the proof finds its full force only where there is a receptive heart. It is a subjective certainty which is produced, valid only for the possessor. Yet even this statement must be qualified, for a strong individual conviction is contagious, and doubtless in many cases the faith of the individual is the flame at which the faith of others is lighted. As has been said, it is a proof which is open to the heathen as well as the Christian. The true Light lighteth every man that cometh into the world. But this argument reaches its most complete and satisfactory form in the experience of the Christian. The Spirit beareth witness with his spirit that he is the child of God. The presence of God in his soul is verified by his deepest and most sacred spiritual exercises. He who has learned to know God in Christ has that certainty of Him which is itself the assurance of eternal life.

(2) The moral argument comes to us along the line of a twofold revelation of God, namely, in conscience and in the moral order of the world.

This is not the place to give a formal definition of conscience. Suffice it here to say that it is that within us which distinguishes between right and wrong and lays obligation upon us to do the right. It stands alone in the soul as something which although in us is yet not of us. It speaks with authority, laying commands upon us, testifying to a law to which we owe obedience. Its "categorical imperative," as Kant calls it, brooks no questioning, and we cannot but acknowledge its right over us. Now how shall we explain conscience? It is not the voice of our own natures, for our nature struggles against conscience and would repudiate it, if it could. It is not the voice of

our fellow-men, for of that conscience is itself the judge. We explain it best when we regard it as the mouth-piece of a higher voice, even the voice of God. And the God thus revealed to us is a personal Being. Only a personal will can command our will. When in the silence of our souls conscience raises her voice of command or threatening, from the Sinai-height of a righteous law the living God Himself is speaking to our souls.

And there is also a moral order at work in the world which reveals the existence of God. Human society is built up upon the foundation of the moral law. Its institutions require for their normal and successful working conformity to the principles of right. Thus immorality breaks down the family and injustice the state. The world is so constituted that in the long run, if not at every time and in every place, right conduct brings happiness and wrong conduct brings suffering. And more than this, there is evidence that a righteous Will is ruling the world, so that slowly but surely the right is triumphing and the wrong is going under. Even disbelievers in a personal God, like Matthew Arnold, are compelled to recognize a "Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." It is true that in a world of sin like ours there are many facts that seem to break the force of this argument. But rightly understood, instead of telling against the divine existence, they point to a life beyond the present, in which the divine righteousness will have full scope to work out its holy purposes. Kant's chief argument for the divine existence is derived from these very facts. He urges that there must be a God to reward suffering goodness with happiness in another world, and to bring deserved retribution upon prosperous and insolent evil-doing.

(3) Once more God reveals Himself in the constitution and operations of the human soul. This gives us the psychological argument. How shall we explain the exist-

ence of the soul? Man stands high above both the unintelligent world and the animal. He is a person, with all that that implies, a self-conscious being, possessed of freedom, guided by reason, as well as a moral and religious being. "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god!" But who was the workman that made this piece of work? Nature? Nature is nothing but matter and energy. We must have a sufficient cause. But here is one that is utterly insufficient. We explain the statue by the skill of the artist who moulds the marble. But here the marble makes the statue. Or is the cause evolution? Evolution is nothing but a law; it is not a cause; and even as a law evolution fails to explain the soul of man. None but a Spirit, higher and greater than the human spirit, can be the cause of this wondrous being. Nor must we confine our argument to the constitution of the soul. Its activities require for their explanation the presence and power of a higher Spirit, in whom we "live and move and have our being." "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." Only upon the assumption that God exists and that He energizes in every soul can we explain the ongoings of the soul itself.

(4) The teleological argument is derived from the revelation of the divine thought in nature. The world is instinct with reason. It is not an aggregate of accidental forms but an ordered system. Everywhere there is rationality, that is, relations which only reason can discover and which can be explained only upon the assumption that they are the result of a supreme Reason. What we call the laws of nature, the observed uniformities in the operation of the natural forces, are ideal principles, the expression of thought, inherent in things as their regulative principles, yet not to be explained through matter and

energy. The fabric of nature is built up upon mathematical principles, like the work of the human engineer. Agassiz could as truly as beautifully call the "natural system" of zoölogy "a translation of the Creator's thoughts into human language." Or, to take an example even more striking, consider the beauty in nature. What is beauty? Not matter, not energy, not any combination of matter or energy. We have all heard of the artist who mixed his colors with brains. The colors of nature are mixed with brains. Mind alone perceives beauty. Mind alone can have originated it. It demands for its explanation a supreme Beauty, One "altogether lovely." And then, when we come to the adaptations of nature, with their evidences of design, the argument becomes even more convincing. Purpose, skill, design alone explain the adjustments of the heavenly bodies, the relations of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, the process of development from the protozoön to man, the adaptation of organs to their functions, the arrangements of human society, the events of human history.

There was a time, not long since, when the theory of organic and inorganic evolution seemed to have shattered the argument from design. But closer acquaintance with this wonderful hypothesis, which, although yet unproved and doubtless greatly to be modified, carries with it so great a weight of probability, has shown that it is a friend rather than an enemy of the argument from evidences of design. It has taught us to look less at the part and more at the whole. It has revealed to us a vast plan slowly wrought out from the beginning. It has given us an explanation of many parts of the divine work, where before we had to receive it as a mere mystery of power. It has enlarged our view of the divine Wisdom which from the beginning has been shaping all things with reference to

"That far-off divine event,
Toward which the whole creation moves."

(5) Again, God reveals Himself as the First Cause of the world and the Ground of its continued existence. The cosmological argument bases itself upon the principle of causality. The world about us is an effect. We begin with any object and go backward in time, seeking its ultimate cause. But each cause proves to be itself an effect, and we go on indefinitely in a fruitless search till we are lost in an endless series. We fare no better when we seek a ground for all things. Everything is dependent upon something else. Starting from any point, we may go outward in space, seeking something on which all things depend, but which itself depends on nothing. But again we are baffled. And thus our logic brings us to a divine First Cause, One who has made all things and in whom all things consist, the Creator, the Preserver, the Governor of the Universe.

Here, once more, popular objections are raised from the side of evolution, popular, I say, because the true man of science agrees with Huxley when he says (*Nineteenth Century*, vol. xix., p. 202):

“Now it appears to me that the scientific investigator is wholly incompetent to say anything at all about the first origin of the material universe. The whole power of his organon vanishes when he has to step beyond the chain of natural causes and effects.”

But there are many, not so wise, who think that evolution does away with the necessity of a Creator. Yet what is evolution? As has been already said, it is only a law, not a cause; it shows us the method but not the power which has brought about the present forms of the inorganic and organic worlds. Evolution itself requires a divine Cause behind it. Clerk Maxwell said (“Life,” p. 330), “I have looked into most philosophical systems, and I have seen that none will work without a God.” The same may be said of evolution, whether we regard it as a philosophy or

as a working hypothesis of science : it will not work without a God—an ever-present, living God, continually energizing in nature. Moreover, there are gaps in the natural history of the universe which evolution has never filled up and probably never will fill up—besides the original creation, the transition from inorganic matter to life, and the transition from the animal to man. We might add, though with more doubt, the transition from the vegetable to the animal, and from some of the species to their next following species. If everywhere in the course of evolution God's providence is required, at these points we have need of His creative power.

Or will it be said that matter and energy are eternal and that in them we find the First Cause? A more futile claim could not be made. Neither matter nor energy exhibits any of the attributes of a First Cause. The molecules or atoms of matter, infinitely numerous in the universe, are distributed into between sixty and seventy different classes, in which absolute uniformity of size and vibratory motion prevails—a uniformity which, as Sir John Herschel and Clerk Maxwell have shown, proves them to possess “the essential character of a manufactured article.” The latest theory of the constitution of matter, Sir William Thomson's theory of “vortex atoms” in an absolutely homogeneous and frictionless fluid, requires a Power above that of matter or energy for the creation of the original atoms. Even farther is energy from manifesting the attributes of a First Cause. The principle of the conservation of energy shows that the amount of energy in the universe is limited. The law of the dissipation of energy proves that the energy available for work is slowly being frittered away in the form of heat. The same mechanical principles which make a perpetual-motion machine impossible show beyond a peradventure that the energy of the universe will, unless now unknown causes should begin to operate, come to a standstill. But

what has an end must have had a beginning. Thus we are brought back to the necessity of a First Cause, or what Aristotle called a *Primum Movens*, a Power which initiated the motions of the universe.

(6) Finally, we have the ontological argument, derided by all superficial thinkers, but profoundly significant to every truly philosophical mind. God reveals Himself in the necessary idea of the Absolute or Infinite. When we look at the finite things about us, things that have had a beginning and will have an end, things that change and decay, things that exist only as they depend upon other things, things that are imperfect, inevitably there arises in the mind the idea of some Being or something that has eternally existed, that is unchangeable, that is self-existent and independent. This idea asserts itself with necessary force. We cannot think without it. It is a "necessary datum of consciousness." Men cannot rid their consciousness of it. They may deny its existence, but it is there all the same. They may call it by some other name, but it shows the same attributes. They may claim to prove the divine existence without this proof, but they always smuggle it in somewhere in the course of their argument. For the idea of the Absolute is there. As the Wise Man has said (Eccles. iii. 11, R. V., margin), God has set eternity in our heart. Now we argue that a necessary idea is true. The idea of the Absolute proves the existence of the Absolute. If we distrust our necessary ideas we fall into universal scepticism. We do not claim that this argument, any more than the others taken singly, proves the full theistic conception of God, but we claim that it does prove the existence of an Absolute Being. And we cannot doubt that this idea is itself a token of the presence of the Deity Himself in our souls.

II. We have left, in the second place, the task of gathering together the knowledge furnished us by the natural

revelation of God. By the same investigations which prove *that* God is, we learn *what* He is. The knowledge of His existence and His nature are inseparable. Herbert Spencer, indeed, declares ("First Principles," p. 46, Am. ed.) that it is the "deepest, widest, and most certain of all facts, that the Power which the Universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable." But the agnostic is not even consistent with himself, for he declares that his Unknown not only exists but is a Power or a Cause. The truth is that we cannot know that God is without at the same time knowing much of what He is. Herbert Spencer arbitrarily admits the validity of our two last arguments and repudiates all the rest. But it is a matter for rejoicing that the prevalent philosophy of our time is not atheistic. The Christian theist says to the agnostic with his Unknown God, what Paul said to the Athenians, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare we unto you." (See H. B. Smith's "Apologetics," p. 45.)

Let us now look more closely at the knowledge of God's nature which has come to us along the line of the proof for the divine existence. We reverse the order in which the proofs were presented. First, we have what may be called the *ontological attributes* of God. He is the Absolute or Infinite, self-existent, independent of all other beings, capable of existing out of relation to all things, although we know Him only in His relations to the things which He has made. He is One, for if there were two or more absolutes, none would be absolute. He is the Eternal, who was and is and is to come, the one Being superior to all limitations of time. He is the Unchanging One, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He is superior to all limitations of space, yet omnipresent and everywhere active in space.

Next, we have revealed to us what we may designate the *cosmological attributes* of God. God is the self-caused Being. The question is often asked, after we have been

inquiring for the cause of the universe, "What is the cause of God?" It is not a foolish question. We not only have a right to ask it but ought to ask it. The law of causality has its rights even in the presence of God, who gave it to us. But the answer to the question does not carry us outside of God. He is His own cause. He is at once cause and effect. The old Nicene Fathers availed themselves of this fact—though most theologians would to-day hesitate to follow them in their use of it—in their explanation of the inner relations of the Trinity. And then God is omnipotent. His power is without limit. He has made all things. He is the ground of all things. He preserves them in existence. He governs them in His providence. I said that God's power is unlimited. Let me guard the statement against misunderstanding. I do not mean that it is not limited by His own nature and will. God is not mere power. His power is limited by His wisdom and justice and love. Moreover, there are certain limits of His own making in the creature. There is a true sense in which the material creation limits God. There is a still more significant sense in which human freedom limits the divine power. But these limitations God has Himself constituted. He could at any time, if He wished, remove them. Along the line of the revelation which gives its force to the cosmological argument we are brought close to the personality of God. The whole weight of our reasoning respecting the First Cause goes to show that it is a Will. It is will alone which explains the power which the universe manifests. Yet the cosmological reasoning rather suggests than proves this. We must look further.

God's revelation of Himself in the rationality of nature and in the human soul, as we have investigated it in connection with the teleological and psychological arguments, first allows the *personality* of God to dawn in full-orbed splendor upon us. A person is a self-conscious and self-

determining being. The great truth which Christian theism lays its first, and in some respects its chiefest, emphasis upon is the personality of God. Among the personal attributes we give the foremost place to God's spirituality. He is not material. His essence is like our higher essence. Then He is a Being of infinite knowledge, who does not reach knowledge and truth by slow processes like us, but has all knowledge and all truth from the first, yea, is the Source of all knowledge and all truth. All possible things and all actual things are present to His thought. Next, He is possessed of infinite wisdom, conceiving the highest ends and reaching them by the best means. Once more, God is free. The power of choice which is the deepest element in our manhood is an attribute of God, who is none the less free because He always uses this power aright. In Him freedom and necessity meet in that highest form of freedom, what the philosophers call "real freedom," which is a moral, though not a natural necessity. Again, God, like us, is possessed of feeling. All that is purest and best in human sensibility is found in God. And, as has been already remarked, God is the highest Beauty, as He is the source of all finite beauty.

God's revelation in conscience and the moral order of the world gives us the knowledge of His *moral attributes*. He is the Holy One, the Being utterly opposed in His nature to all evil, who gathers into one all possible moral perfections. He is the Truth. The uniformity of natural law is a manifestation of God's truth in the sphere of nature. It finds its fullest manifestation in his utterances to men. God is the Righteous One. To every being He gives his due, the *sum cuique*, with absolute impartiality. His righteousness is manifest in the maintenance of His own rights, in rewards and punishments and grace among other rational beings. God is the Good One. He sets before Him as His end in dealing with His creatures their highest well-being and happiness.

God's revelation in religious experience furnishes us with the highest attribute of all, which we may call the *religious attribute*, namely, the divine Love. God is Love. It is His nature to give. He finds His highest good in the good of others. He is greatest when He stoops lowest. He is happiest when He serves.

The question will be raised, Is it true that all men possess such a knowledge of God as has just been delineated? Do not facts point to a very different conception of God among the great majority of men? The only honest answer will be the affirmative. All the forms of the divine revelation are open to every man. All the arguments which have been enumerated are within the reach of every man. But all men do not put the true interpretation upon the divine revelation. All men see the same sun, but it does not look alike to all. The botanist and the child look upon the same flower, but the botanist sees what the child cannot see. God's natural revelation is made to a sinful race, and there are influences at work in men which tend to obscure the revelation to a greater or less extent. Hence the almost infinite diversity in the religious beliefs of men. Each man has a spiritual defect of vision, which distorts his apprehension of God, a kind of spiritual astigmatism, of which he may be wholly unaware. And then society and even physical nature have been so corrupted by sin that the revelation comes to the individual to a considerable extent through a disturbing medium. So it happens that few men, in their natural state, attain a true knowledge of God as He reveals Himself in natural ways. Especially is this the case with respect to the moral and religious revelation of God.

Such a description of the divine nature as has here been given is unknown among the heathen. Once only has it been approximately reached. In the days of decaying religion in Greece and Rome philosophy came like a fresh west wind to blow away the clouds of heathen mythology.

gies and modes of thought, and the sun of theism shone forth for a little with almost unobscured radiance. But that was an exception—one of those exceptions that prove the rule. The natural revelation, as we have seen it, is that revelation seen by the aid of Christianity. To us the absurdities and immoralities of heathenism seem strange in view of God's universal revelation, and doubtless the heathen are, as Paul says, without excuse when they turn from the light they have to ways of life which their own consciences declare to be sinful. But we must remember that we approach the investigation of the natural revelation with all the light which God's gracious revelation in Christ has to throw upon the subject. Even though we may not have experienced the grace of Christ's salvation in our hearts, the clarifying and helpful influences of Christianity are all about us.

We are now prepared to state our knowledge of God, as it comes to us through the natural revelation, in few and simple words. What better can be chosen than those of the good old "Shorter Catechism," which we older people learned at our mother's knees, but which our children here in New England know but little of, while to their great loss we put nothing in its place: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." Wise and happy is he who believes these words with all his heart and lives up to his belief.

II.

THE REDEMPTIVE REVELATION

CHRISTIAN Theology takes for granted the reality and the truth of the universal revelation of God. It finds a place in its system for all the doctrines of Natural Theology—such as the divine existence, God's attributes, His providence, and the like—gladly welcoming and appropriating all the light that comes to it from this source. It is not, however, chiefly concerned with the general revelation. The distinctive truths of the Christian faith are derived from a higher revelation—a revelation which, though destined for all men, was at first given to only a part of the human race and is even now unknown to the majority of men. This is sometimes called the special revelation to distinguish it from the universal, or the supernatural in contradistinction from the natural. But we best express its distinctive characteristics when we call it the *redemptive revelation*.

It is to this redemptive revelation that I wish to call your attention at the present time. I shall endeavor to show why it has been given, in what it consists, what methods God has followed in making it, through what stages it has run in reaching its culmination in Christ. The proof that it is what it claims to be will be given on another occasion.

I. The purpose of this revelation, as the epithet *redemptive* implies, is redemption, or, as it might with equal truth be stated, the establishment of God's kingdom in a world of sin.

The necessity of such a revelation lies in the fact of sin. In a world of holy beings the natural revelation would suffice for all spiritual and temporal needs. There would be an unobscured vision of God and undisturbed communion with Him. I do not mean to say that there would be no need in such a world of higher and fuller manifestations of God, as the spiritual receptivity of its inhabitants was matured and enlarged. I do not deny the possibility that if our race had remained sinless, the divine Son would have become incarnate for the perfecting of the race—though I confess my utter inability to do more than speculate upon the subject. But there seems to me every reason to believe that in that case the higher revelations would come simply and normally in the line of the natural revelation. They would be a part of it. It would be as it is in the case of the child and the parent. From the first the child stands in full communion with its father and mother. But the parental love is revealed in ever new and higher manifestations as fast as the child's soul is opened to receive them. There is simply an enlargement and development of the original relation.

But alas, we do not live in a holy world. It is a sinful world. Every man becomes a sinner so soon as he becomes a responsible actor in the world. That great law of the spiritual universe which Christ has expressed in the words, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," operates in its negative form in every sinner. Because they are impure and sinful they do not see God as He is. He reveals Himself to them, but they do not receive the revelation, or they put a false interpretation upon it. The spiritual eye, instead of being single, is evil, and the whole soul is full of darkness. And this darkness is increased by the fact that not only is the soul shut off from a true knowledge of God by its own sin, but society is permeated with sin and the effects of sin. No man can form his beliefs and opinions in entire indepen-

dence of his fellow-men. He is inevitably influenced by the beliefs and opinions of those about him, as well as by the prevalent modes of thought, customs, notions of the society in which he lives. Now in a sinful world the sinful social environment tends to obscure the knowledge of God. Herein lies the great power of corrupt religions over their votaries. And then, once more, even nature is no longer the pure medium of the divine revelation. The effects of sin are manifest in the natural world itself. The human body begins its career with an inherited nature that is physically depraved and that is, like the soul in its inherited tendencies to sin, the occasion of sin. The consequences of sin are manifest in various disturbances of material nature. The original nature as it came from the hands of God no longer exists. The creation has been made subject to vanity (Rom. viii. 20). For all these reasons the natural revelation is not sufficient. It furnishes sinful men with neither the knowledge nor the help which they so sadly lack. The view it gives of God is imperfect and distorted. It discloses no relief from the guilt and power of sin. The need of the world lost in sin is for redemption.

It is the object of the redemptive revelation to supply this need. God makes Himself known in new aspects and new ways, that thus He may deliver the sinful race from all the evils into which it has fallen. Redemption is a term of very wide import, both negatively and positively. It means not only the salvation of men from the guilt of sin, but the carrying of them forward to that perfect and sinless manhood for which they were created. It means not only the rescue of individuals from an evil world, but the deliverance of the race itself and its attainment of the divine ideal—so that whatever may be the case with individuals, the race as a whole shall be saved. It implies the renovation of all the institutions of society and all the activities of mankind. It will not be com-

pleted until the natural world is redeemed, "the creation itself also delivered from the bondage of corruption" (Rom. viii. 21), including the redemption of the body in the resurrection and the restoration of material nature to its true condition—or more than that, its participation in "the glorious liberty of the children of God." The same great purpose is expressed by the conception of the kingdom of God. In the sinful world God's rightful dominion has been subverted. He rules by His power but not by the free consent of His subjects. Redemption is the re-establishment of His sway. As fast as it advances God's kingdom comes and His will is done in this world of sin.

The redemptive revelation is a means to redemption or the establishment of God's kingdom as an end. This is its purpose, its final cause. In all its manifestations it is subordinate to this object. This determines its form and manner, as well as its contents. This explains the fact that it is chiefly concerned with the moral and religious attributes of God, and only incidentally with the metaphysical, physical, and intellectual attributes so fully brought to light by the natural revelation.

One point deserves a moment's notice before we leave this branch of our subject. The view just taken of the redemptive revelation may seem to imply that this revelation is an afterthought of God, consequent upon human sin, while the natural revelation expresses the original divine intention. There is indeed an element of truth here, in so far as sin comes in conflict with the divine ideal, which we must regard as at least logically first in the eternal thought of God. This conception of the redemptive revelation, however, does not give us the whole truth. In God's eternal plan, sin was foreseen and provided for. God knew that the world He created was to be a sinful world. And so while undisturbed holiness might be the ideal, sin and redemption were the determining elements in the divine purpose. The redemptive

revelation was no more an afterthought than the natural revelation. God meant that the two should work side by side, both performing their parts in carrying out His great work of salvation.

II. We pass now to consider the contents of the redemptive revelation. And here, as in dealing with the natural revelation, we must be on our guard against the notion that revelation consists only or chiefly in doctrinal instruction. This notion, which has been widespread and inveterate, has wrought great confusion in Christian thought, and it has been one of the most meritorious services of modern theology that it has succeeded to so great an extent in supplanting it by a larger and truer conception of the redemptive revelation. That revelation, like all revelation, is a self-manifestation of God, an unveiling of Himself, a disclosure of His being and His ways. It gives us not merely a knowledge *about* God but a knowledge *of* God. The doctrinal instruction which it contains, and I would not deny that this constitutes one of its important elements, has for its object to bring men directly to God Himself, that they may see Him as He is.

There is another misconception, closely related to that just mentioned, which we shall also do well to avoid. This is the identification of the redemptive revelation and the Holy Scriptures. Undoubtedly the Bible is a constituent element of the revelation. It is one of the most important, in some respects the most important, channels through which the revelation of grace comes to us. We may even in a true sense call it itself a revelation of God. But, strictly speaking, the Bible is not the revelation but the record of that revelation. There was a revelation before there was any Bible. It might now exist even if there were no Bible. The Bible is a means and not an end. The end of revelation is the manifestation of God Himself. The Bible is a blessed book to those who find God in it and through it. But, so far as we are concerned,

it is no better than any other book unless we find God by its means.

The redemptive revelation, then, is the manifestation of God as the Redeemer, as the God of grace. As its object is redemption, so it makes known to men what they need to know for their redemption. Its contents may be viewed under two aspects—as a revelation of God's nature and character, and as a revelation of His redemptive work. Let us consider each of these aspects.

The redemptive revelation is intended to give men a new view of God's nature and character. It takes us to the highest point in the knowledge of God and reveals Him as the perfect Love. Of this supreme divine attribute the natural revelation gives some vague hints but no certain knowledge. At most it suggests a mild and complacent benevolence which is often obscured, and at times seems to be completely obliterated, by His sterner attributes as they are manifested in the darker aspects of nature. It is only when God Himself comes to meet us in the redemptive revelation that we begin to grasp that depth of meaning which is expressed by the Christian word "love." When He manifests Himself as the Saviour, we first understand that He is a Being to whom it is more blessed to give than to receive, that it is His joy to impart Himself to others, that He finds His greatness in condescension and self-denial, His highest good in seeking the good of His creatures, that He is merciful and compassionate, ready to pardon and to save even the chief of sinners. A new light dawns upon the soul when God teaches it the meaning of those wonderful words, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." A part of this revelation of God's love is His manifestation of Himself in His personal relation to men as the Father, the universal Father who seeks and would save every erring child, and in a still higher

sense the Father of those who give themselves to Him. Another element in the revelation of love, still more tender, is the manifestation of God as Son, the divine Word who stoops to earth, becomes incarnate, dies for our redemption, raises our manhood in His own person to the throne of God. And still another element is the revelation of God as the Spirit, the indwelling God, the spiritual life of man, who holds the soul in union with the Father and the Christ, thus giving to the redemptive revelation its most profound and sacred meaning. Nor should we forget that accompanying the revelation of God's love there is a higher manifestation of His holiness, of the utter separation of God from all sin and evil, and of His awful purity, in the light of which we discover the true extent and depth of the guilt of sin. And out of this revelation of God's holiness flows a profounder disclosure of His righteousness, as a power both of salvation and of judgment.

And then, the redemptive revelation is a manifestation of God's work of grace. It discovers to us that great system of redemptive agencies which God has established for the salvation of mankind. God is seen from the first active for the recovery of His lost world. Behind the scenes and coming only now and then into sight there is a vast redemptive machinery. God Himself, the holy angels, good men, institutions divinely established and guided, all work together to save the sinner and build up the saint. God's providence is enlisted in the blessed enterprise. The incarnation of the divine Son, his human ministry, and the atoning death upon the cross, by which provision is made for the pardon of sin, reveal to us some of the most important aspects of this system of redemptive agencies. The work of the risen Christ, the King of the divine kingdom, seated at the right hand of the majesty on high, and the work of the Holy Spirit whom he sends, make known still other aspects. The way of salva-

tion is disclosed to the sinner, justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Regeneration, the new life, and all the other saving facts and truths of the Christian system form a part of this wonderful revelation of the divine grace, this manifestation of the redemptive power of God. To it also belong the discovery of the heaven of the blessed, the assurance of the triumph of redemption on earth, the second coming of the Redeemer, the resurrection, the judgment, the doom of the wicked, the perfecting of the race in the eternal blessedness, the new heavens and the new earth.

III. Such, briefly stated, are the contents of the redemptive revelation. We inquire now as to its method. It is easy to see that God, in making such a revelation, must proceed in a very different way from that which He follows in the natural revelation. The knowledge of God and His work of grace, which has just been outlined, cannot, from the nature of the case, be given to a sinful race all at once and in all its fulness. Revelation implies not only a revealer but a mind to receive the revelation. There must be a receptivity on the part of those to whom the revelation comes. And the psychological obstacle, which the lack of such receptivity presents, cannot be removed by a mere exercise of power. In making the human soul what it is, God has set limits to His own operations. A new idea cannot be inserted into a mind as a nail is driven into a board. It is doubtful whether even a miracle would make a two-years-old child understand the solution of a problem in the differential calculus. Now, what would be psychologically impossible in the case of a child, because contrary to the laws of human development, would be still more impossible in the case of a race not only in its moral childhood but sunk in sin. Before the revelation can be made the receptivity for it must be created. God, even with the help of the supernatural means which He employs, must begin at the bottom and work up.

The revelation could be made no faster than it could be received. And when once received, it must be made so to operate upon the already awakened receptivity as to stimulate it, and enlarge it, and prepare it for still further revelation.

Let us look at some of the more important elements in the Divine method.

1. The relation of the supernatural to the natural. We call the redemptive revelation supernatural for two reasons: First, because its purpose—namely, redemption—is not provided for in the natural revelation; and secondly, because some of the chief agencies employed do not belong to the system of natural forces as manifested in the ordinary operations of the physical and spiritual worlds. It is in this latter sense that we ordinarily call the revelation supernatural. Among these supernatural means are those operations of God in external nature to which we give the name of miracles, and that divine influence upon the human soul which we call inspiration, and those interferences of God in the affairs of men and nations which—though we cannot call them, strictly speaking, miracles—go beyond the laws of His ordinary providence. This supernatural or miraculous working of God is what gives its distinctive character to the redemptive revelation. Remove it and reduce all to the level of the natural, and the revelation ceases to be redemptive and Christianity becomes a mere “republication of the religion of nature.” It was by these supernatural agencies that God was able to reach a race so far fallen that they could not be found and raised by natural means. It was by them that God, so to speak, secured a fulcrum for His lever and was able to do His redemptive work.

But although these agencies were indispensable, God used them with a wise economy. Wherever it was possible He employed natural means. If we take the revelation as a whole, in all its long history, although the su-

supernatural is everywhere present in it, yet the natural forms a much larger element. God's method was to graft the supernatural upon the natural, and when it became incorporated into the natural to subject it to the laws of the latter. Accordingly, there was no conflict between the two, except in so far as the natural order had become corrupted by sin. And this suggests a very interesting consideration. There is reason to believe that when God made use of the supernatural, He always had disturbances in the order of nature which were produced by human sin. Where nature had become perverted, the supernatural came in as a healing and restorative influence, tending to bring nature back to its normal condition, or, in other words, to overcome the false nature and re-establish the true nature. And in so far as nature was what God had made it, it fell in with the new influences and served them.

2. The redemptive revelation began with individuals. It was not made to all mankind, as is the case with the natural revelation. God was concerned to get in the first place a foothold for the redemption which He was to bestow upon mankind. It was not so important that many should be affected superficially as that a few should be deeply and truly. Then they could be the bearers of the revelation to their fellow-men. Accordingly, the redemptive revelation was based upon election, which has been tersely and beautifully defined by a modern theologian as "a method by which God uses the few to bless the many" (Bruce, "Chief End of Revelation," p. 80). We are so wont to associate the doctrine of election with certain philosophical questions which have grown up about it, that we miss the simple meaning which makes the conception so important in the Bible. All through the history of His kingdom God's method of reaching the race has been the elective method. The election was of two kinds, individual and national. The individuals chosen were men of high moral and spiritual attainments, whom God had been

providentially preparing for His purpose. They were men with good stuff in them, men of spiritual insight, personal piety, and, above all, men of great devotion to God, ready and willing to do His will. How much their own free will had to do in making them fit instruments for God's work we may not be able to say. Doubtless it was a most important element in the problem. But we must not forget that election has roots that run back into the eternal plan of God, and that He had the largest share in making them what they were. They were not perfect men. Often they had great faults, and sometimes even great moral blemishes. But they were men whom God in His wisdom chose because He saw that He could use them. Sometimes their very faults, overruled by God, were made to advance His work. And then, besides the individuals chosen, God selected a nation to be the bearer of His grace to men. Israel had the high privilege of being the Chosen People, chosen not for its own sake alone but to bring a blessing to the whole human race. Finally, election culminates in Jesus Christ, God's Chosen One, divine yet human, at once the bearer of the revelation to mankind and himself the highest revelation of God.

3. Again, the method of the redemptive revelation was educational. This feature has been clearly recognized by theologians only in comparatively recent times. To a man who was not a professed theologian, the German *literateur* Lessing, belongs the credit of having brought into distinct view what has proved one of the most fruitful conceptions of modern theology, a conception that is undoubtedly as Biblical as it is truly scientific. The principle which Lessing laid down in his famous book on the Education of Mankind ("Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts") is, "What education is to the individual, revelation is to the race." Education is a twofold process; on the one side there is a preparing of the soil and a sowing of seed, on the other a culture of the growing plant.

Thus God proceeded in His redemptive dealings with the race. Individuals and nations have been fitted to receive the divine truth, and it has been imparted to them, as they were able to receive it. At the same time they have been prepared and enabled to impart it to others, to pass on the torch which had been lighted and placed in their hands. In this education God used both supernatural and natural means. He concentrated upon His chosen instruments such influences, spiritual, moral, secular, as were adapted to bring them to a knowledge of Himself and His ways. He put them through long courses of training. He thus lifted them up to the level of the revelation He had to make, and when once they became possessed of the revelation, the revelation itself became one of the educational influences.

Most clearly and strikingly is this method illustrated in the case of the great men of Bible times. Such names as Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Peter, John, Paul recall to our minds processes of training always long, generally difficult and painful. Even the Master himself was a pupil in the divine school, and was fitted for his public ministry only after thirty years of discipline. Then consider the education of Israel. The whole Old Testament is occupied with it. From the Chosen People in the wilderness to the Chosen People at the time of Christ the stride is immense. During all the intervening period the process was steadily advancing. We are too apt in thinking of Israel at the time of Christ to have regard only to the element in the nation which opposed the Saviour and denied his Messiahship. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But this very Israel which rejected the Saviour had possession of the divine truth by which Jesus was prepared for his work. It had in it the men and women who were ready to receive his Gospel. The fulness of time had come. Humanly speaking, the incarnation would have been an impossibility until Israel

had reached this stage in its religious development. And the reaching of this stage was the result of God's long schooling.

Nor shall we forget the education of the heathen nations, not indeed by supernatural means, yet not for that reason the less real, which was going on, during all the history of Israel and which prepared them to receive the Gospel when God's time had come.

4. Once more, as the thoughts with which we have just been engaged have prepared us to realize, God's method in the redemptive revelation is progressive. The revelation came in the form of a sacred history, and it follows the law of all history, progression from the lower to the higher, the law of historical evolution. Some of the most telling analogies and illustrations of this process of historical growth are taken from the realm of organic life, and it is interesting to observe that our Saviour himself freely employed them. The law of the kingdom of God, as he expressed it, is, "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark iv. 28). But the progress is not merely that of ordinary history. There is everywhere that mingling of the supernatural with the natural which we have discovered to be characteristic of the redemptive revelation in all its parts. There is a striking analogy between this process and that which has been passed through in the evolution of the forms of the natural world. Unless we take the view of the extreme evolutionists, who place evolution in the place of God, at certain points in the history of the natural world God must have interposed with creative acts. But in every case the new element, as soon as it became incorporated into the natural order, became subject to the laws of the natural development. The new fact exists first merely in the germ; it develops into its mature form by a natural process. So with the divine revelation. It is this historical character of revelation which gives the Bible its great

charm, and makes it so different from the sacred books of other religions. Compare it, for example, with the Koran, a book in which the historical element is totally absent. It presents us with a full-grown revelation, with no historical preparation and no opportunity for further growth.

It follows from the progressive character of the redemptive revelation that the earlier stages are relatively imperfect. As compared with the fulness of grace and truth revealed in Jesus Christ, the highest point reached by the Old Testament revelation seems low and inadequate. From the nature of the case it could not be otherwise. What Paul said in view of the contrast between the present and the future life, the Old Testament prophets and teachers might have said in regard to the contrast between their stage of revelation and that which was to come in Christ, "We know in part, and we prophesy in part. Now we see in a mirror darkly" (1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12). The revelation recorded in the Bible can never be rightly judged unless this fact be borne in mind, and due allowance made for it. The truth of the lower stage is relative and imperfect. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I have become a man I have put away childish things" (1 Cor. xiii. 11). Children know things under imperfect forms. Their stage of development permits no more. It is not enough to say that in the lower stage we have only a lesser quantity of truth, which is supplemented in the higher. It is a less perfect truth, a truth that is only relatively true. The fuller truth of manhood does not only add something to the childish view; it corrects it. "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part is done away" (1 Cor. xiii. 10). All of its truth is taken up into a higher truth, while its imperfect element is thrown away as a husk from which the kernel has been taken. Our Saviour himself recognizes this principle in the Sermon on the Mount. He says that he came not to destroy but to ful-

fil the law (Matt. v. 17). But he proceeds to fulfil it by bringing its precepts up to the level of a loftier morality than the Jew of the Old Dispensation from his stage of knowledge could possibly find in them (Matt. v. 17-48). As has been beautifully and truly said, "Jesus puts himself under the law, so far as it is divine, above it, so far as it is Mosaic" (Orelli, "Old Testament Prophecy," Eng. Trans., p. 57). In the earlier stages of revelation—and measurably in all its stages—God adapts His method to the understanding of men. He exercises a certain condescension to human infirmity and imperfection. As Calvin has said, "For who, even of the meanest capacity, understands not that God lisps, as it were, with us, just as nurses are accustomed to speak to infants?" ("Institutes," Bk. I., ch. xiii., § 1).

It is thus we are to explain some of the chief difficulties which present themselves in the study of the Bible. The relative imperfections of the Jewish Law, the moral problems involved in the history of the Canaanitish wars, the apparently defective morality of even inspired Hebrew thought, as evidenced, *e.g.*, by the imprecatory Psalms, the moral and spiritual inferiority of the Old Testament to the New, are to be regarded as inevitable incidents of the process of revelation.

IV. In conclusion, let us look briefly at the stages of the redemptive revelation. This part of our subject has been to some extent anticipated.

According to the Biblical record, God has revealed Himself in two great dispensations of His grace, which we designate respectively as the Old and the New.

1. The Old Dispensation is connected with the history of the Hebrew nation and its preparation to be the bearer of the redemptive revelation to mankind. It falls into the three stages of the Patriarchal, the Legal, and the Prophetic. As in the New Dispensation, the dominant idea is redemption, or the coming of God's Kingdom. But here

the external or temporal redemption overshadows the spiritual redemption, so far as the present is concerned, while the deliverance from sin and the establishment of God's Kingdom as a spiritual reign of God belongs largely to the future. In the patriarchal period God makes Himself known as the one true God, as distinct from the heathen divinities. He manifests His power and His holiness. His revelation is confined to a single family. With them a covenant is established. To them a promise is given, which clearly, though in very general terms, assures them that through their instrumentality the whole race is to receive the divine revelation and to be visited by the divine grace. In the legal stage a people is chosen, a law of constitution given, institutions religious and political founded, a fuller revelation made of the holiness of God. The idea of the kingdom of God, only partially realized in the Jewish commonwealth, makes its appearance. The institutions of this period are typical, turning men's thoughts to a divine salvation which is only vaguely understood. In this period the promise is reasserted. The Chosen People know that they have been selected to be the channel of God's blessings to mankind. In the prophetic period, as God trains His People in the hard school of suffering, punishing them for their sins and teaching them their dependence upon Him, the hope of the future becomes the prominent element in the revelation. The coming Kingdom of God and the spiritual redemption fill up the prophet's horizon. The advent of the Messiah, the Redeemer and the King of the divine Kingdom, is more and more clearly described. The redemptive work of the Christ, and especially his atoning work as the vicarious sufferer for the race, begins to appear. A New Covenant of spiritual import, the blessed gift of which is the forgiveness of sins, is promised (Jer. xxxi. 31 seq.). The heathen nations are to be gathered into the Kingdom and made partakers of the divine redemption.

2. And now the New Dispensation dawns. It is in Jesus Christ that the redemptive revelation reaches its consummation. Hitherto God had revealed Himself, so to speak, at second hand, through men and by historical and natural agencies. Now He becomes incarnate in the person of the well-beloved Son. The Word becomes flesh. The only-begotten Son, which was in the bosom of the Father, declares Him (John i. 14, 18). He can say to the perplexed disciple who asks that he may be shown the Father, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). His wondering followers hear him say, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27). Jesus Christ is the present God. By his teaching and his work he fulfils the Law. He preaches the redemption from sin, the Gospel of grace. He establishes the Kingdom of God in his own person and calls all men unto it. By his death he makes propitiation for sin. By the sending of his Spirit he founds the Christian church and sets in operation the agencies by which the world is to be redeemed and God's kingdom established on earth. Through him life and immortality are brought to light. He gives the assurance of the final triumph of the Kingdom and the overthrow of evil.

The redemptive revelation was completed by Christ's disciples. Men who knew him, who had imbibed his spirit, who had learned the truth from his lips, were filled with the Holy Spirit and enabled to make known the truth which he could not reveal fully and clearly while he was on earth, because it could only be understood and received in the light of his finished work and his entrance into his kingly glory.

With Christ and his disciples the redemptive revela-

tion is finished. It has been given in its completeness to mankind and needs only to be appropriated. All that men need to know of God and His ways, in order that they may be delivered from sin and its consequences, and restored to the lost birthright of the sons of God, has been revealed to them. If they will, they may know God as He is and find in Him the supply of all their needs. For this is eternal life that they should know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

One final question : Is there to be any higher revelation of God ? In one sense, yes. In the blessedness of heaven, and still more in the final state, we shall know God even as also we are known. Yet it is doubtful whether that should be called a new revelation. Rather will it not be the full appropriation of the present revelation, when every hindrance is removed ? Sin will be gone, the spiritual vision will be clarified, and we shall see God in all the perfectness of His redemptive revelation.

III.

THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY

It may seem almost absurd to attempt to present, in a single chapter a subject like this, upon which whole libraries have been written. And certainly the difficulty of doing so with any degree of success is very great. Yet, even at the risk of giving scarcely more than a dry enumeration of the proofs, I shall make the trial. A bird's-eye view is unsatisfactory enough, but it has its value. It often opens the way for a more careful examination, to which it serves to give intelligent direction. So I hope it will be in our case. If this brief survey of the great field shall lead anyone to a thorough and thoughtful study of the subject, my purpose will have been amply fulfilled.

Before passing to the evidences themselves, let me say a word on the nature of the proof. Here, as in the case of the argument for the divine existence, the revelation is itself the proof, in what it is and what it does—its nature and its effects. As there we sought for the different methods of the divine revelation and found in each an argument, so here. Only it is to be observed that here we have to do with a revelation that is more complex and difficult of exhibition, so that it will not be so easy to give an exhaustive and logical presentation of the arguments.

A word, also, respecting the point of view from which the evidences are to be presented. We can readily see that the proof will vary in its form according to the class which it is desired to reach. The Christian who seeks to justify to his intellect the faith that long ago carried con-

viction to his heart; the honest inquirer respecting the truth that is as yet unverified in his experience; the young man or woman who is making the transition from an inherited to a personal faith; the unbeliever who actively opposes Christianity; the heathen who is entangled in the prepossessions and prejudices of a false religion—these different classes need each to be met with a different handling of the arguments. But there is one stand-point which seems to be central and to furnish a rallying-point for all the others. It is that of the Christian who, already convinced in heart and head of the truth of Christianity, is asked for a reason of the hope that is in him. If he can with rational argument make good his position, if he can clearly show the strong foundations on which his faith rests, the task is accomplished. He gives to each class the answer which it needs. It is from this point of view that I ask you to consider the subject.

The proof falls, naturally, into two branches:

I. The Experimental Proof.

II. The Confirmatory.

Under the latter head we shall distinguish a number of subordinate arguments.

I. We begin with the proof which is at once the simplest and the most convincing, namely, that from personal experience.

Christianity does not come to men primarily as a system of doctrine demanding the assent of the intellect, but rather as a practical remedy for sin asking the consent of the will to its application. The Gospel offers pardon for sin on the ground of Christ's atoning work, restoration to fellowship and sonship with God, and the grace of the Holy Spirit as the power by which sin may be overcome and holiness attained. The means or instrument by which this blessing is appropriated is faith in Christ—a faith which consists primarily in trust, an act of the will, a giving of one's self in entire submission into the hands of the

Saviour. Now this offer can only be tested in one way, that is, by a personal trial. It belongs to the realm of inward and personal experience. And those who have fully and fairly tried it have never found it to fail. The result of faith is that experience which we call conversion or regeneration, the change of heart, in which God brings the soul into an entirely new relation to Himself. Sin is forgiven, God makes Himself known as the personal Father, Christ begins (to use Paul's striking language) to "dwell in the heart by faith," the Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God, a new direction is given to the will, so that the converted man may be truly said to have died unto sin and to live unto righteousness. The Christian is a new creation. Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Horace Bushnell has expressed in glowing language the nature and results of the initial faith of the Christian life ("Life," p. 192 seq.):

"Christian faith is the faith of a transaction. It is not the committing of one's thought in assent to any proposition, but the trusting of one's being to a Being, there to be rested, kept, guided, moulded, governed, and possessed forever." "It gives you God, fills you with God in immediate, experimental knowledge, puts you in possession of all there is in Him, and allows you to be invested with His character itself."

Now here is God personally present and active in the very soul, manifesting Himself as He does not to the world. I am not speaking of the high-wrought mystical experiences which some Christians claim to have had, but of the normal experiences which all Christians have had. This presence of God is a reality which cannot be doubted. The certainty which it produces possesses the highest validity. It is a first-hand knowledge. It is like the knowledge we have of our nearest and dearest friends, the

knowledge that reveals to us their inmost nature. It is the knowledge of a great crisis which has given to life a new meaning. Or if there has been no such definite experience, as in the case of those who have been brought by Christian nurture through a gradual process into the fulness of the Christian life, it is like the first knowledge of a parent's love which antedates and lays the basis for all other knowledge. How wonderful are its first effects, the peace and rest and joy it produces, the new relation to God and men and the world! Jonathan Edwards's description of the first effects of his own conversion is representative ("Life," p. 61):

"The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast of appearance of divine glory in almost everything. God's excellency, His wisdom, His purity and love seemed to appear in everything; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature."

There are doubtful Christians, but in all normal Christian experience the reality of God's presence in conversion is the one fact that can never be doubted, the fixed point in the spiritual life. Many a Christian has gone cheerfully to martyrdom to attest the truth of his conviction, saying with Paul, "I know whom I have believed."

Nor is this all. The Christian is not obliged, in order to justify his faith, to appeal to the past alone. There is a growing and cumulative experience in the Christian life which is a perennial proof of the truth of the Gospel. The Christian's fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. It is a personal relation. Spirit meeting spirit in a communion as real and certain in its way as any that exists between man and man. In this blessed intercourse eternal life has begun (John xvii. 3). God's help is given in difficulty, His comfort in sorrow, His

strength in weakness, His guidance in perplexity. In the work of sanctification in which sin is overcome and the soul is formed into the image of Christ, and in the work of the Kingdom, in which we are fellow-laborers with God, His Spirit is the power of whose constant presence and aid we are abidingly conscious. In all these experiences God becomes better known, and His redemptive revelation more and more truly realized. The Christian's certainty is thus constantly growing. "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18).

This, then, is the strong foundation upon which the Christian's faith rests. The Scriptures teach that this inner certainty, this invincible conviction is wrought by God Himself by the power of His Holy Spirit actually present and working in the soul (John vii. 37-39; xvi. 12-15; Rom. viii. 16; 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5; 1 John v. 6-10). To this *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*, this witness of the Spirit, the Protestant Reformers delighted to appeal in their controversies with the Roman Catholics, who found their authority in church and Pope. This always has been and always will be the ultimate proof. We know the existence of the sun because his light and warmth and life are all about us. We know God and Christ and all the revelation of God's grace because they are within us. The child or the savage knows the existence of the sun as truly, though not with as much fulness and precision of knowledge, as the scientist. The humblest Christian, ignorant of all the knowledge of the schools, who perhaps has never heard of the Evidences of Christianity, knows the truth of the Christian revelation with as much certainty as the most learned theologian.*

* In the author's manuscript are these pencilled lines: "Add to the experience of the individual that of the Christian church." For that we must now refer the reader to one of his former books—"The Evidence of Christian Experience."

It is true that there is something private and personal about this proof. The certainty upon which it is based is a subjective certainty. It is always possible for the unbeliever to deny it, to declare that he has had no such experience, and that he sees no reason to regard it as anything else than a delusion—in many cases doubtless sincere and pious, but still a figment of the imagination. The Christian readily admits the subjective character of the argument. Indeed, he asserts that it could not be different. It is not the only kind of knowledge in the world which is the property of the individual rather than of mankind. The blind man's eyes must be opened before he can see the world in all its beauty. Only the artist's training will give one the artist's susceptibility and skill. He who will understand love and self-sacrifice must himself have loved and denied himself. And not different is it in the highest sphere, out of which men are shut not only by lack of training but by sin. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). Accordingly, the great effort of the Christian minister, and every other Christian worker, must be to bring men to the trial of Christianity. All other arguments are weak in comparison with that of personal experience. If the will can once be brought to make the trial, then assuredly the divine light will pour into the soul. And let us not ignore the influence of the Christian's personal conviction in bringing unbelievers, and especially the earnest seekers after light who cannot fairly be classed with unbelievers, to the truth. A real belief can never be mistaken for mere make-believe. There is attractive power in it. It is the bridge over which many a soul passes to personal faith. After our Saviour's conversation with the woman of Samaria, as we are told, "many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of

the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did." But when he came into their city their faith became no longer second-hand, but personal. "Many more believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John iv. 39-42).

II. We come now to the Confirmatory Proof. The inner certainty of personal experience seeks, like all such knowledge, external verification. For this it finds abundant material. The redemptive revelation makes its presence known in many ways and each furnishes an argument for its reality and truth.

1. We begin with the argument derived from the Nature of the Christian System. This is closely allied to the experimental proof and might even seem, if not carefully examined, to be a repetition of it. It is, however, in reality quite different. In the experimental argument the proof is derived from the personal knowledge in the religious life of the facts and truths which constitute the redemptive revelation. In the argument now before us these same facts are subjected to the tests of the reason. It is argued that the revelation is true because it is rational, or, to state the argument more specifically, because it is consonant with the character of God and the needs of men. This is the line of proof which has been developed with so much power and beauty by Erskine of Linlathen in that book which has brought conviction to so many inquiring souls, the "Remarks on the Internal Evidence for the Truth of Revealed Religion." Erskine called it the internal evidence, because it is drawn from the internal facts of the Christian system, rather than from miracles and prophecy and the outward effects of Christianity.

The redemptive revelation is what we should rationally expect from the character of God. All men have a knowledge of Him through His natural revelation. This is in-

sufficient for their needs, but it is sufficient to give them much true knowledge respecting the divine character. Now it is reasonable to suppose that such a Being would interpose to furnish His sinful creatures with the knowledge and help they need for their salvation. And when we come to examine the revelation which the Scriptures and Christian experience declare to have been given, we find that it is in all respects worthy of God. The divine love, the Fatherhood of God, the stooping of God to earth in the incarnation, the revelation through Jesus Christ the God-man, the atoning death upon the cross with its disclosures of the depths of divine compassion, the sending of the Spirit, the establishment of the Christian church, the bestowal of pardon upon guilty sinners, their restoration to sonship, the promised triumphs of the Kingdom, the blessedness of heaven, the final subduing of evil—these are facts and truths which bear the divine stamp upon them. Men could not have invented such ideas. Only the all-holy One Himself could be their author. If these things be not of God, then there is no God. We pronounce unhesitatingly against the claims of heathen religions, because their conceptions of God are not worthy of God. We pronounce as unhesitatingly in favor of Christianity because its conceptions of God are worthy of God.

Moreover, the redemptive revelation is precisely adapted to the needs of sinful, lost men. The way of salvation through faith in a crucified Saviour who has made atonement for human sin, so that God speaks His justifying word of grace before a single act of true holiness has been achieved, is just what is needed to give men the courage and the motive to enter upon that life of obedience and service which is the true end of their being. What sinners need is not so much knowledge as spiritual power, and this is what Christianity gives them by its method of redemption and the divine bestowal of the Holy Spirit.

They need a career, and this they find in the Kingdom of God. The methods of salvation which other religions offer are not adapted to human wants. The Christian method is.

I said that in this argument we subject the redemptive revelation to the tests of reason. Let me qualify my statement. I do not assert that reason in its natural state is capable of sitting in judgment upon the Christian revelation. It is inevitable that to the reason of the man who has had no personal experience of God as He has revealed Himself in Christ these facts should in many respects seem to be foolishness. It is to the regenerate reason alone that the argument with which we are concerned carries its full force. The eye must be single before the whole body can be full of light. And yet even the natural reason can recognize something of the intrinsic beauty and verisimilitude of the Christian system. The *anima naturaliter Christiana*, as Tertullian so finely called it, the soul which is by nature Christian, even before it comes to Christ, finds in Christianity oftentimes a truth which takes possession of the reason, and leads the will to the humble acceptance of the Saviour. So it was with Augustine. So it has been to many a soul since his day.

2. The heart of the redemptive revelation is Christ. The whole revelation is concentrated in him as in a focus. When, therefore, we pass to the consideration of the argument from the Personality and Character of Christ, we are simply continuing the proof from the nature of the Christian system. We shall look at his human life, with no assumptions respecting his divinity, leaving to the conclusion all inferences as to his higher nature.

Jesus Christ was the child of poor and uneducated peasants. He was born in one of the smallest towns and brought up in one of the most despised towns of a country that had no status among the nations, either politically or intellectually. He had no advantages in the way of

early education. His occupation was that of a mechanic, his associations chiefly with the humble and unlettered. His environment was not such as to favor the production of a great man. Look first at the moral greatness of this man's life and character. It was a life of spotless purity. On this point we have not only his own testimony and that of his disciples, but his life is before us in the four Gospels, in its perfect words and works. To call it "the great moral miracle" is scarcely to use a metaphor. And then it was a life of entire self-sacrifice, of constant communion with God. To live in his presence gave one a new idea of God.

Then look at Christ's teachings. Even unbelief stands with uncovered head before the Sermon on the Mount, and confesses that here is the perfect morality. Never man spake like this man. After nineteen centuries the moral ideal which Jesus exhibited still towers above the world's practice like some lofty unclimbed mountain. And the impression made by the morality he taught is only increased when we consider his spiritual teachings and his Gospel of salvation.

Even more wonderful was the plan of Christ, the establishment of a kingdom of God, which is to grow until the whole race shall be brought under its sway. Other men have had their schemes of universal conquest, the Alexanders and Cæsars; but their plans were contracted and short-sighted. The means they employed were material. The means Jesus employed were spiritual. Their plans failed utterly. Christ's plan has from the first been advancing steadily in its fulfilment, until no thoughtful mind can doubt its final complete success.

This man claimed to be divine. He declared that he had come to earth to be the Saviour of mankind. He calmly asserted that he was to judge the race and assign to men their final destiny. He maintained that this destiny would depend upon the personal relation of men to

him and his gospel. He appropriated all the predictions of the ancient prophets. And the impression which he made upon his followers was such that, one and all, they asserted his divinity, some in language even stronger than he employed.

And then, what a death was that of Jesus—a death voluntarily accepted, a death avowedly for the salvation of the race. By it men were led to realize the divine love and self-sacrifice. Every incident in the painful history of the Saviour's last days and hours was worthy of the man and correspondent to his claims. We gather our parallels from the benefactors and martyrs of mankind, but the comparison is all that is needed to show how wholly unique is the death of Jesus Christ.

Now, what shall we say of all this? How shall we account for this man and his work and the claims he made? Science calls for a sufficient cause for every phenomenon. What is the sufficient cause, the adequate explanation of this wonderful phenomenon in human history? Once unbelief labored to prove that he was an impostor. But the facts made that explanation so utterly ridiculous that no respectable unbeliever would dare to advance it to-day. So the endeavor has been made to substitute for it the view that he was a fanatic or amiable enthusiast. But the calmness, the self-poise, the forethought, the "sweet reasonableness" of the man make that explanation almost as inadequate as the other. Defeated here, unbelief has tried to show that the marvellous picture of Christ which the four Gospels contain is the production, either wholly or in part, of the evangelists, or of the first disciples, whose fond imaginations the evangelists have reported. But the stream can be no greater than its sources. Those humble Galilean peasants could not have invented such a character as that. The explanation fails to do more than involve its authors in new difficulties. Nor are these difficulties diminished if the theory of myths is appealed

to in their behalf, for it still remains to explain how *such* myths, so utterly different in their quality from the common myths of history, could have arisen.

There is but one satisfactory and adequate explanation, and that is the simple one that Jesus was what he claimed to be and what his disciples believed him to be—the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. That life of Jesus stands as an unsolved puzzle in the midst of human history unless we accept the assertion that he was the Word made flesh. If we refuse to admit it, we throw away the key to human history. And what shall we say of God and religion if this be not true? Said Charles Kingsley (“Westminster Sermons,” pp. 5–16):

“Consider but this one argument. It is no new one; it has lain, I believe, unspoken and instinctive, yet most potent and inspiring, in many a mind in many an age. If there be a God, must he not be the best of all beings? But if he who suffered on Calvary were not God, but a mere creature, then, as I hold, there must have been a creature in the universe better than God himself. . . . Man has fancied to himself for eighteen hundred years a more beautiful God, a nobler God, a better God than the God who actually exists.”

3. Still another argument is derived from the Relation of Christianity to the History of the World. It would take us quite too far afield were we to attempt to treat this argument with any degree of fulness. The salient points alone can be indicated. The proof is teleological in its character, exhibiting a manifest providential relation. It aims to show that Christ and Christianity came in “the fulness of the time” (Gal. iv. 4), that all the movements of earlier history converge in the Gospel and find their meaning in it.

Look first at the relation of Judaism to Christianity. The Jews were the people of hope. Their golden age, as

has been strikingly said, lay not in the past, like that of other nations, but in the future. Their history, taken by itself, is a torso. To understand Judaism it must be viewed in the light of Christianity. We have seen in a previous chapter how the Hebrews were separated from all the other nations of the earth, made the recipients of a pure monotheism, trained by centuries of suffering and vicissitude to become the teachers of mankind. Any other race would have utterly disappeared in the misfortunes which befell Israel. But the Chosen People survived, retained the consciousness of their mission, saw ever more clearly the future that lay before them. The coming kingdom of God and the Messiah appeared more and more fully upon the prophetic horizon. The germs of doctrines that had power to transform the world lay waiting to be fructified in their religious system. The Gospel came as the fulfilment of the long history, the explanation of its meaning, the key to its problems. Christ came as the fulfilment of the messianic ideal. And before we leave this branch of our subject, let us take a single glance at the condition of the Jewish nation when Christ appeared. The conquests and political oppression of their later history had scattered the Jews over the whole Roman Empire. Especially were they concentrated in the great centres of civilization—Rome, Corinth, Alexandria, Antioch. The Diaspora, or Jews of the dispersion, had taken on a measure of Roman civilization. They had learned to speak the Greek language, the *lingua franca* of the times. Their contact with heathenism had at once strengthened their faith in monotheism and made them less rigid in their religious ideas and more ready to welcome new light. Thus was the way opened for the spread of Christianity by their means.

In the relation of heathenism to Christianity a like preparation and providential connection may be recognized. I referred in the last chapter to the providential training

of the heathen nations. Their whole history bears witness to it. There was an intellectual preparation for Christianity in ancient culture. The literature, art, natural science, and especially the philosophy of Greece, shaped that wonderful language which was to carry the Gospel to the ends of the known world and furnished the forms of thought which the religion of the Crucified was to appropriate and consecrate to its higher uses. How great is the debt which the Christian church owes to Plato's philosophy, and who can doubt that there was a divine connection between the Academy and the Gospel? There was also a moral preparation in the religions of the ancient world. Imperfect and perverted as they were, yet they kept alive the sense of need for a higher and truer revelation. And when they lost their power and sank into corruption, in the presence of the fearful immorality which had gained the upper hand at the time of Christ, the way was opened for earnest men to find in the pure ethics of Christianity and the moral motive power which it furnished in its redemptive system, that perfect religion of which their souls stood in need. Nor must we forget the political preparation for Christianity in the history of the heathen world. The Persian conquests—to go no further back—consolidated Asia and Africa about the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Alexander carried the Greek language and literature over the Orient. Finally Rome appeared upon the scene, and the most remarkable political organization ever known, the Roman Empire, held the civilized world under its sway. Without this preparation Christianity would have been, humanly speaking, an impossibility. With it the spread of the religion of Jesus was secured. The ancient world was like a great mass of combustible material waiting for the spark that should set it afire. Christ came and soon it was blazing far and wide. The mind must be dull indeed which can contemplate the wonderful history of

the heathen world before the Saviour's coming and not see in it a manifest preparation for his religion.

4. Again, we find an argument in the Miracles which accompanied the redemptive revelation. During the last century and the earlier part of our own this was the favorite proof, with which only the argument from prophecy was placed upon an equal footing. The Christian thought of our day has reacted from what was undoubtedly a too exclusive reliance upon these arguments. Moreover, we understand the nature of the miracles and their relation to the Christian revelation better than we did. It is my intention to devote a chapter to the nature and true meaning of the miracles, and I shall therefore speak very briefly with regard to them at the present time. Miracles are not, as the old Apologetics taught, divine credentials attached externally to the revelation for its authentication. They are a part of the revelation itself. They are not violations of the laws of nature, but events which cannot be accounted for by physical forces or human agencies and which therefore are ascribed to a higher Cause. They are not known as miracles simply by the power manifested in them—that would not distinguish them from the miracles of evil beings—but by their manifestation of God's grace in redemption. When the redemptive revelation appears in the realm of physical nature operating immediately and supernaturally upon it, we have a miracle. Now the miracles had for those who first beheld them a very high value. It was not possible to deny that here was a more than human power at work. Of course it was open to the caviller to declare that it was a diabolical agency, as the scribes and Pharisees did with respect to Christ's miracles (Matt. xii. 22-30). But the soul that was willing to receive them and that saw in them the manifestation of the divine grace, must have been at once awe-struck and convinced. For us they have a different value. We do not see them. We have to prove the miracles before we can

use them in proof. But when we have accepted the moral miracle of Christ's person and work and have experienced in our own souls the regenerating influence of God's spirit, which if not a miracle is in many respects so like one, we are prepared to accept as true the miracles which the Bible relates. It is difficult to believe that Christ should have wrought such wonders in the spiritual world and not have wrought equal wonders in the material world. And when we find that the miracles are inextricably connected with the history of the redemptive revelation and especially with the history of Christ, we can discover in the connection of the two an evidence that has its great value of the truth of both. Pascal says, "Doctrines must be judged by miracles; miracles must be judged by doctrines." This is no mere reasoning in a circle. In the connection between the miracles and the revelation, in the adaptation of the one to the other, we have a perfectly legitimate argument. And the more we know of the men who relate these miracles to us, the more impossible it is to think that they either invented them or imagined them.

5. Next comes the argument from the Predictions of the Bible. Prophecy is part of the very texture of the Christian revelation. The prophets were God's inspired messengers, they carried His word to men. Prophecy was not altogether prediction of future events. It was largely concerned with present events. But prediction was an essential element in it. Over and over again the truth of God's prophets and their difference from the false prophets are proved by the fulfilment of their predictions. The predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah respecting the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities—to take no other instances—stand in the Bible as unimpeachable evidence of the truth of the revelation of which they form a part. More interesting, and as proof no less cogent, is the long series of predictions of the Messiah, beginning with the first promise of the seed of the woman which was to

bruise the serpent's head, gathering strength in the prosperous days of the kingdom when David and his immediate descendants sat upon the throne as types of the coming One, deepening and revealing the vicarious sacrifice of the Servant of God in the days of the Captivity, and standing out distinct and circumstantial on the last pages of the Old Testament Scriptures. How shall we explain it? the prophecy and its fulfilment in Jesus the Christ? How shall we explain the progressive fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament, re-emphasized and expanded by the Saviour himself, respecting the establishment of the kingdom of God? The world has nothing like this to show elsewhere. I grant that the argument from prophecy has not always been wisely managed, that there has been a tendency to find fulfilments in cases of doubtful applicability. But making all necessary deduction for an apologetic zeal that has not been always according to knowledge, the fact remains that from the first a great system of prediction has entered into the fabric of the redemptive revelation, and that so far as history has advanced it has verified by its fulfilments the truth of the things predicted. And as the world moves on, and the history of the world is made, doubtless there will be new and still stronger evidences derived from this source.

6. We know a cause through its effects. The practical argument, among the external proofs, for Christianity is what it has accomplished. We may consider what it has done for individuals and what it has done for the world. One of the most telling evidences of its truth is in the change of individual hearts and lives. It does transform men. The fact is undeniable. Even if it is an imagination, it is an imagination that has the power to make new men. It shows itself in the life. It has its root in faith but the tree and the fruit are right character and good works. Said one of the early church Fathers (Athenagoras, "A Plea for the Christians," ch. xi.):

“Among us you will find uneducated persons, and artisans, and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth; they do not rehearse speeches, but exhibit good works; when struck, they do not strike again; when robbed, they do not go to law; they give to those that ask of them, and love their neighbors as themselves.”

It is probable that the majority of those who become Christians in the stricter sense of the term have been first impressed and attracted to Christianity by the godly lives of believers, fathers, mothers, friends, people the reality of whose faith they could not doubt because it manifested itself in the life.

But the argument may be drawn not only from the effect of the Christian religion upon individuals, but also from its effect upon the world. Our Saviour declared that the establishment of the kingdom was to be a gradual process, which he illustrated by the analogy of the leaven in the mass of dough and the growth of the plant from the seed. Now so far as human history has advanced, the kingdom of God has steadily advanced, transforming the world in its progress. First, there is the spread of Christianity. This is not the highest form of the argument, for mere numbers and territorial extent do not prove the truth of religion; yet it is not without its value when rightly stated. The few disciples gathered about Jesus at the time of his death had increased by the end of the first century to 500,000; by the end of the second to 2,000,000; by the end of the third to 5,000,000; by the end of the fourth to 10,000,000; at the close of the tenth to 50,000,000; at the close of the fifteenth to 100,000,000; until in the year 1880 the whole number of Christians was reckoned at 410,900,000 (Dorchester's "Problem of Religious Progress," p. 515; Fisher, in his "History of the Christian Church," p. 580, places

the number at the present time somewhat lower, namely, 388,000,000). Thus about a third of the race have become at least nominally Christian. The value of these numbers is increased when we remember the obstacles Christianity had to encounter, especially at the outset, that it went directly counter in its teachings to the natural inclinations of men, that it was despised and ridiculed by the more intelligent classes, that the means employed were purely spiritual. In later times both the forms and the methods of Christianity became to a large extent worldly, but probably the change proved a hindrance rather than a help to the progress of the Christian religion. But even when all abatement has been made for the corrupt influences which have invaded it, the steady advance of the religion of the Cross is the great wonder of history. Other religions have had their periods of success, but none has shown this sure and steady growth and this ability to hold its own in spite of all opposing influences.

The argument becomes far stronger when we pass from the numbers to the transforming effects of Christianity. The kingdom of God has been coming with steady progress since the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost and as steadily it has changed the moral aspect of the world. It has come without observation, working from within outward, as a spiritual principle, first renovating the hearts of men, then regenerating society. To its influence we owe the wonderful moral change the world has undergone since the days of classical heathenism. Christianity has brought about the general recognition of the dignity and worth of manhood. It has effected the gradual abolition of slavery. It has secured the amelioration of legal systems. It has elevated woman, created the Christian family, given to the world the blessings of the Christian home, asserted the rights of children. To it we are indebted for our institutions of charity. Christianity has been the motive power in the

overthrow of class distinctions. In religion it has, after many struggles, secured to men the right of private judgment in matters of conscience, a right which the hierarchical churches still resist, but which they are powerless permanently to withhold. It has established new methods in politics and government, and is destined to exert a still greater influence upon them in the future. It has brought about, in a measure at least, the recognition of the brotherhood of nations, and we know that the time must come, sooner or later, when under its benign influence men will beat their spears into pruning-hooks and nations learn war no more. Nor shall we forget, in this survey of the triumphs of Christianity, that the greatest intellectual, social, and moral movement of modern times, the Protestant Reformation, began in a revival of faith in Jesus Christ.

And then, consider the present power of Christianity. We have but to compare the Christian and the heathen nations, or the nations in which the Christian faith exists in its purity and those in which it has become corrupted, to see how great and beneficent is the influence of Christianity. The presence or absence of Christianity means the presence or absence of civilization in the highest sense of the term. Compare England and Germany with Turkey and China. See what the labors of Christian missionaries have accomplished in the civilization of the islands of the Pacific. Consider the way in which the civilization of Christian countries differs according to the purity or degeneracy of their faith, the difference between England and Spain, between Protestant and Roman Catholic Canada. Is it said that civilization is the cause rather than the effect, that when Christianity has finished its work, civilization will exist without it? Then look at the attempts that have been made to retain civilization without Christianity, at France during the Revolution, at Paris when the Commune had possession of it in 1871. Of all

villains the civilized is the worst. Doubtless civilization can exist for a time without Christianity. The better educated classes, which have received a Christian training and a Christian morality, can cast aside Christ, and playing with a superficial culture and a more superficial philosophy call it religion or even an improvement upon religion. But take away the religion of the masses, and will they retain morality and philanthropy, and respect for government? No, close upon the heels of the agnosticism of our times come nihilism, and atheism, ready to overthrow religion, morality, government, and all the sanctions by which the perpetuity and well-being of society are maintained.

As we look out over the world and see the great forward movement in every department of human effort which characterizes our age, we discover that the work is being done chiefly by a few nations. What are the nations that exert this regenerating power? The three great Protestant nations, England, Germany, and the United States. Can we doubt that their influence and success is due to the religion of Jesus? To them, if they are true to Christ, belongs the future of mankind. They, like Israel of old, are Chosen Peoples. Let them realize the mission that has been committed to them, let them seek to build up the kingdom of God, and the day of the world's redemption will speedily come. Let them be untrue to the task God has given them to do, and He will give to other nations worthier of it the privilege of carrying to its successful completion God's plan for the uplifting and renovation of the race.

Such, then, in brief outline, are the evidences of Christianity, the grounds of the Christian's faith. We do not accept with credulity a system imposed upon us by our fellow-men. We do not follow our feelings or our imagination. We believe because we find in our faith the highest reason. We look within, and there is an experi-

ence of God's presence and power, and of the grace of Christ, the reality of which we cannot doubt. We look without, and we discover in what the religion of redemption has accomplished the evidence of its truth. And when those who are not Christians doubt, we ask them only to deal with this subject as honestly as they would with any other, and to subject it to as reasonable tests. He who asks will receive; he who seeks will find; to him who knocks it will be opened.

IV.

THE MEANING OF THE MIRACLES

JOHN in prison had fallen into momentary doubt as to the messiahship of Jesus. Accordingly, he sent two of his disciples to the Master with the question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" The answer was, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. xi. 4, 5). The proof which Jesus had to furnish was twofold, his words and his works, his gospel and his miracles. If these bore upon them the sure marks of their divine origin, then but one conclusion was possible, that Jesus was the Christ.

In our own times one half of this evidence is widely discredited. The miracles are felt by many to be a burden rather than a help to Christianity. Popular scepticism directs its most successful assaults against the miraculous element in the Christian system. It must be confessed that even the defenders of Christianity show a certain timidity in dealing with the subject. Partly this is the result of an undue emphasis laid upon the miracles in the evidences of Christianity, which has brought about its inevitable reaction. But still more it is the result of a misunderstanding of what miracles are. They have been regarded too much as mere acts of power, designed to arouse wonder and thus perforce to compel belief in the divine mission of prophets and apostles and the Christ

himself. The moral and spiritual meaning, which belongs intrinsically to them, has not been sufficiently perceived, nor has their organic connection with God's great work of revelation and redemption. If the reality of the miracles is made to rest upon mere testimony, even though it be the testimony of the best and most self-sacrificing of men, the task of vindicating them must always be most difficult, so that by the time we have made out a fair case for them, they have become of but little use in the evidences of Christianity. But if we can show that the miracles are part and parcel of God's redemptive revelation itself, that they are in their moral character as expressive of God's grace as any words uttered by inspired lips, that they reveal truths that no mere words could make known, in a word, that revelation and redemption would be imperfect and maimed without miracles—then the work of proving their reality becomes comparatively easy and their use in the proof of Christianity invaluable.

It is my purpose to show, so far as I can in a single chapter, what is the true meaning of the scriptural miracles and the place they occupy in the Christian system. I am sure that, even though I should succeed only in part, there are some who will be helped and strengthened in their faith by a fuller understanding of this difficult subject.

I. In the first place, the miracles presuppose the disturbance of the order of physical nature by sin. That there is such a disturbance every thoughtful person must admit, whether he looks for knowledge on the subject to the teachings of scripture or the facts of experience. We do not stand in our true relation to the world about us. Man was made to have dominion over nature. That is the truth the Bible declares upon its first page. It is the truth prophesied by the evolution of the lower orders of being in the earlier history of the world. It is the truth borne in upon us by all our observation of the world as it is to-day.

To begin with what is nearest to us: in the true relation of things our souls should have dominion over our bodies. The body was meant to be the obedient organ of the spirit. Nothing could be more striking than the difference between the animal and man in this respect. Without denying the reality, within certain limits, of animal intelligence, yet it is evident that instinct or inherited habit has a far larger influence in the bodily actions of the animal. The new-born calf or colt is to a great extent already in possession of the bodily activities which it is to use in after life. It has no infancy and but a very short childhood. It has but little to learn and it learns it quickly. But in the case of man how different. How enormous is the change from the utter helplessness of infancy to the full activity of maturity. And the whole process of education, by which the mature state is attained, is a continuous process of the mastery of the soul over the body. An animal walks at birth. A child learns to walk, gaining by slow degrees the power to use its muscles and limbs. Still more complicated and difficult is the learning to talk and the learning to think connected with it. We do not see how the brain is slowly exercised to its work, by what processes its delicate machinery is put into gear and trained to work. But the slightest consideration suffices to give us an inkling of the wonderful truth. Nor is it needful to do more than allude to the equally marvellous processes by which the bodily dexterities of later life are attained. Watch once the practised fingers of the musician as they fly over the keys, and think of the mastery of the mind over the body thus manifested. There is no limit to the possible power of our free wills over the physical organisms associated with them. And undoubtedly it was meant that the control should be perfect, that our bodies should become in all things the willing instruments of our spirits, and especially that they should carry out the behests of souls devoted to holy ends.

But how far is the actual from the ideal! Our bodies are not and never become what they were meant to be. Sinful influences, running through long lines of ancestry to our first parents, have impaired our physical constitution. We come into the world disordered, born to weakness, sickness, and death. In every pain we bear, in every failure of our physical powers by which we are hindered in our work, in the sensitiveness and irritability which turn the harmony of body and soul into discord, we have the witness to the confusion sin has wrought. Still more in death. Death is not natural. It is the one unnatural, utterly unnatural experience of the world. Christianity may take away even now its sting. Christ's redemption may even throw a glory around death as the entrance into the heavenly blessedness. But until the resurrection day brings the final conquest over death, it will be the great evidence of the confusion sin has wrought in nature. For man was not made to die. Death, that to the brute is natural, is to man the subversion of his true destination. It is the superficial sentiment of popular religion that tries to comfort the mother who has laid away in the grave the precious body of her child by telling her that death is beautiful. The Bible never represents it so.

Infirmity, disease, death come to us as the result of others' sin, the corporate sin of the world, in the consequences of which we all participate. But our own sin produces the same result, adding to the heritage of disorder into which we are born. How many there are who with bodies weakened, strength gone, ability for useful work crippled, life fast ebbing, must confess that their own sin has made it so.

And it is not only in our relation to our bodies that the disorder which sin has brought into the world is manifest. Sin has disturbed man's relation to external nature. On the broad scale of the world's life this is manifest enough.

The pride, the avarice, the cruelty of man have turned many of earth's most lovely regions into a desert. War with its devastation has altered the very climate of the regions over which it has swept. Think how the selfish greed for wealth—and that is merely one of the manifestations of sin—is to-day cutting down our forests, impoverishing our soil, filling up our rivers and harbors. Sin has turned man's relation to the animal creation, which should be a relation of protection and friendship, into a relation of enmity and tyranny. How little we think of destroying a whole race of song-birds to gratify the pride of a foolish fashion! And what is true of men in the large is true of us as individuals. Nature, which was made to be our friend, which ought to be the willing and obedient servant of a holy will, is treated as our enemy. We fear her. We oppress her. We turn from her. How we huddle ourselves together in cities and banish from us every vestige of nature as God has made it. How we shut ourselves up in dark houses and stew ourselves with unnatural heat. Anything rather than to let God's bright sunshine tinge our cheeks with its glow or God's pure air fill our lungs and send the warm blood tingling through our veins.

It is sin that crowds the poor together in narrow alleys and festering tenement-houses. It is sin that feeds them with poisoned food. And because man has fallen out with nature, nature has her revenge. She torments us with her tempests and floods and droughts. She kills us with her miasma and her cholera. She fills our cities with discomforts and distresses. She hides her brighter aspects from us. Longfellow tells us in melodious verse of the naturalist Agassiz, how

“ He wandered away and away
With Nature, the dear old nurse,
Who sang to him night and day
The rhymes of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long,
Or his heart began to fail,
She would sing a more wonderful song,
Or tell a more marvellous tale."

That is the way it ought to be with us all. But how few are on such terms with nature! For the great mass of the race it is far different. Even those whose life is spent in outdoor labor, in the open field, still realize the primeval curse of sin, the most of them wringing with weary labor and sweat of brow only a scanty livelihood from a reluctant soil.

II. In the second place, a miracle is a divine restoration of the true order of nature. The old definition of miracles, which was accepted by friends and pointed the attacks of enemies, was that it was a violation or suspension of the order of nature. Now there is a measure of truth in this definition. A miracle does break in upon the order of nature to which we are accustomed. It is the result of the immediate operation of the First Cause. It produces effects which are extraordinary and inexplicable upon the common principles of physical science. But if the facts which have been already brought forward are true, then the common order of nature is not the true order of nature. In our common experience of nature we do not see it in its true character. In many respects, indeed, the world is what it was when God first made it. Matter, energy, with their properties and laws, remain unchanged. So far as the world is uninfluenced by man, it goes on just as it did ten thousand or a million years ago. But where man has come into contact with nature and human sin has spread its blight, a false order of nature has entered. Now it is just here that the miracle has its sphere. Elsewhere God continues to work through His ordinary Providence by means of second causes. But here His power is put forth directly to correct what has become disarranged. The miracle consists not so much

in the immediate interposition of God. Indeed, the distinction between the mediate and the immediate, the indirect and the direct working of God is one of man's making, and it is doubtful whether it has any real meaning except in our thought. But whether the distinction be important or not, it is not so much the divine interposition as the correction of the disturbed course of nature which constitutes the miracle.

The truth of this position becomes obvious when we examine the miracles recorded in the Bible. This, and this alone, gives them an adequate explanation. Take, first, the miracles of the Old Testament. The most of them fall into two great groups, the miracles of the Exodus and the miracles of the two great prophets Elijah and Elisha. The first group is composed of the ten plagues by which the Egyptians were brought to let the Israelites go out of their bondage. These were miracles of judgment and mark the lowest stage among the Biblical miracles. They were all miracles in external nature. It is said by one of the most eminent of modern Old Testament scholars (Oehler's "Old Testament Theology," Am. trans., p. 70) that "the order of their succession stands in close connection with the natural course of the Egyptian year from the time of the first swelling of the Nile, which generally happens in June, to the spring of the following year." Now what was the character of these miracles? how were they restorations of the true order of nature? The answer is obvious. In the primitive constitution of nature, the natural forces work together for the punishment of sin. They do so to a certain extent even now. Many sins are avenged by nature. But more are not. As things are, so great has the disorder become that in very many cases these forces work in the interests of sin. Men like Rameses II. in ancient times, and Napoleon in modern times, so far avail themselves of the resources of science, by which nature is brought under the con-

trol of man, that they employ the powers of nature in the interest of their greed or tyranny or lust. But these great plagues were a divine restoration of the powers of nature for the time being to their true use, to punish crime and to uphold and deliver oppressed innocence.

In the second group of Old Testament miracles we still find miracles of judgment, but miracles of pure mercy begin to be mingled with them, anticipations of God's gracious revelation in the New Dispensation. The poor and famishing are succored, the diseased are healed, the dead are raised. But these miracles of grace and mercy find their full realization in the miraculous works of Christ. His miracles are all of mercy. The two which seem at first to be of a different character, namely, the withering of the barren fig-tree and the permitting of the demons to enter into the herd of swine, are, when rightly understood, no exceptions. The larger number of the Saviour's miracles are restorations of those disorders of nature which have befallen the human body through sin. The rest, such as the making of the wine at the wedding of Cana, the walking on the water, the feeding of the hungry multitudes, point to a power over nature which man is to have when he is freed from the dominion of sin and stands once more in his true relation to nature.

Let us look for a moment at the miracles which concern the human body. We know but little in these days of possession by demons. The malady which in our times comes closest to it is insanity. So clear-headed and broad-minded a man as Charles Kingsley has left on record his sober belief that some cases of madness can only be explained by the assumption of demoniac possession. But be that as it may, in the time of Christ the powers of evil seem to have gotten possession in some cases of the human body. It was one of the effects of sin, not necessarily of personal sin, often probably of ancestral sin.

It was an awful token of the humiliation which has befallen man, of a subjection to evil through his physical nature which puts him on a lower level than the animal. And when the Saviour spoke the word, and the demons came out, leaving the poor victim once more sane and well, in the sphere of the delivered body the true order of nature was restored. So in the case of the diseases which the Master healed. To one who sees the world as it is and compares it with what it might be and what it ought to be, the existence of disease is a fearfully sad fact. Where man ought to stand so much higher than the brute he stands actually lower. (For disease is almost unknown among animals except as they have come under the blighting influence of human sin.) But when the Saviour came, the ravages of disease were stayed and the natural order was restored. The blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard. What a moment it must have been to those diseased ones when they heard the Master's quiet words, "Be thou clean!" and the blood poured gladly through their veins in all the glow and eagerness of perfect health. And then, the miracles of raising from the dead. Death seems the most hopeless of all the evils which have come in the train of sin. The physician may heal disease, or even nature may in part repair her own work of evil. But nature and physician stand alike helpless before death. Yet the miracle brings back nature even in this extremity. Christ stands before the sepulchre and calls, "Lazarus, come forth!" and the dead man appears once more alive and well. In one home at least the rightful reign of life is re-established, the tears of sorrow are wiped away, and for a time at least the curse of sin is removed.

Though in very different ways, the miracles all show themselves to be a restoration of the true order of nature, alike the miracles of judgment and the miracles of mercy.

III. We are next led to ask, What is the purpose of the

miracles? The answer is, It is to reveal God as the God of redemption. They are a constituent and most necessary part of a great scheme or system of revelation which aims at the redemption of mankind or the establishment of God's kingdom in a world of sin. This redemption, as it is described in the Bible, is many-sided. It includes far more than the salvation of individual souls from the guilt of sin, though undoubtedly that is in many respects the most essential element in it. But it includes the redemption of the race of men and of the world itself from all sin and all the consequences of sin, even to the carrying forward of the race and the world to that goal of perfected development which they would have reached had not sin entered the world. If we could once grasp in our Christian thought the largeness of this scriptural conception of redemption, it would give a new aspect to all our Christian work. God's kingdom is to move onward until every enemy of man is vanquished—guilt, sin, suffering, death, Satan, hell—and what of sin and evil remains incorrigible finally excluded from the redeemed world.

God's revelation of redemption was from the first twofold, a revelation in words and in works. The words were the teachings of holy men, consecrated and inspired prophets, culminating in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The works were the miracles of these same prophets and the culmination of the miracles in the wonderful works of Christ. I do not mean that there were not other works merely providential. But the miracles were the essential part of the revelation in works. Now in this system of revelation the words and the works are inseparably united. The revelation would not be complete as a revelation of redemption if either element were absent. We should not know God in His full character as a Redeemer if we had merely the teachings of Moses without those wonderful works of judgment as the result of which God was enabled to lead the Children of Israel out of Egypt with

a high hand. We should not know Jesus Christ as the personal revelation of God, as the God manifest in the flesh, unless we had not only the words such as never man spake, but also his gracious miracles. As a matter of fact, those who reject or make light of the miracles of Christ always reject or make light of his divinity. In their intrinsic nature the miracles are a revelation of God—not merely of His power, but also of His holiness and His love. They stand in the same relation to the revelation in words that the looks and gestures and touch and all the ministries of outward act do to the words of our fellow-men. Christ has taught us as much of the love of God by his healing of the palsied man as John has by all three of his epistles. The miracle of the wedding-feast of Cana was a visible smile of God upon one of the most important and tender experiences of life. The healing of Malchus's ear gives us a deeper insight into the mind of Christ than many of his longest discourses.

It was doubtless essential to the purpose of the miracles that they should be signs pointing from outward things to inward and spiritual realities. There is such a correspondence, divinely constituted, between the physical and the spiritual that the one is ever the symbol of the other. Nature furnishes us with the alphabet by which we read off the secrets of the soul. The bodily members and their functions not only give us the terms by which we describe the invisible operations of the mind, but they furnish us with analogies by which alone we are able to understand the nature and workings of the mind. Who could put into thought or speech the idea of a spiritual joy or suffering, if there were not bodily pleasures and pains with which to compare it? Or could we hope to push our way through the intricate mazes of metaphysics if we had not the analogies of the material world as a clue to guide our every step? So in the miracles there was a symbolizing and expression of spiritual things. The physical disease

was the sign of the far deeper inner disease of sin; the leprosy of the body, of the leprosy of the soul. The bodily blindness was an outward token of the spiritual blindness. And when Christ healed these diseases, it was a sign of the spiritual healing—often, indeed, it was accompanied by the spiritual healing, so that Christ added to the words of comfort for the body the medicine for the soul, “Thy sins be forgiven thee!” Indeed, parallel with the outward miracles we find a corresponding series of spiritual miracles. Blessed he who had the insight to see the latter through the former. Blessed those who can do so now.

But our reasoning respecting the miracles has prepared us to find a further meaning in them, and I cannot but think that it was their chief meaning. They were pledges of the redemption of nature. They give to mankind the assurance that the disorder into which the course of nature has fallen through sin is at last to be fully restored. They are, as the epistle to the Hebrews calls them, “powers of the world to come.” They point to a time when nature will be purged from all the effects of sin and brought into her true relation to God and to man. That such a time is coming the scriptures clearly teach. It is a part of that consummation of all things which is associated with the second advent of our Lord. Glowing pictures of this completion of redemption in the physical world are given in the Revelation of St. John. We read of a time when there shall be “a new heaven and a new earth.” Then “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” Nor is it in the imagery of the Apocalypse alone that this final state is described. Paul tells us that “the last enemy which shall be destroyed is death,” and that “death shall be swallowed up in victory.” He tells us of a “redemption of the body.” He declares that “the creation itself

also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption." Peter writes of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The human body will become in that glorious resurrection day free from death, from sickness, from weakness and from pain, the perfect instrument of the redeemed spirit, a spiritual body perfectly adapted to a spiritual state. Nature, healed of all her disorders, will be brought into complete subjection to man, and through man to God, and will minister at once to man's holiness and his happiness. God's kingdom will be established alike in man and in nature.

Of this redemption of nature the miracles are an anticipation and a pledge. They are outward and visible illustrations of the final state. They furnish to all who can understand their meaning an undeniable proof of the certainty and completeness of God's redemption. They are evidences of the truth of Christianity that speak for themselves. We receive them as we receive the words of Christ and the Apostles, not so much because we can adduce good testimony in their behalf but because they carry their truth written plainly upon them. Other religions lay claim to miracles. But only Christianity gives mankind such miracles, such a system of "powers of the world to come." When one has come to understand them and see their relation to the whole scheme of revelation, the acceptance of them raises far fewer difficulties than their rejection. It is as easy to dispense with Christ's ethics as with his miracles.

IV. But we have still to ask the question why miracles do not occur at the present time? In answering the question I shall take it for granted that there are no miracles now, in spite of the fact that their continuance is claimed by some persons. That there are many remarkable cases of bodily healing in our own times no one will deny. Few Christians would deny that in many cases such cures have been the result of faith and prayer, though not without

the use of natural means. But true miracles there are none. Incurable disease is not cured. Dead men are not raised from the dead. Hungry multitudes are not fed with a few loaves and fishes. Nor is there any reason to suppose that any faith, however great, would to-day bring about such results. Why is this? Is not human need as great as it ever was? Is not God as merciful? Is there not as much demand for outward evidences of God's presence and power?

The reason why the miracles have ceased may be briefly given. It is for the same reason that the revelation itself, as a supernatural revelation, ceased. It was not God's purpose to save the world by the mere exertion of His own power, but by the slow, protracted process of moral influences. Men could not, indeed, save themselves. For this they had neither the knowledge nor the power. And therefore God gave them a supernatural revelation, and through the work of Christ and the mission of the Holy Spirit, has established in the world a system of redemptive agencies by means of which men may be saved. But He has so arranged things that no man is saved except by his own free acceptance of the divine grace. Nay more, He has so far entrusted men with the ministry of the divine grace that redemption goes forward in the world only as men carry it forward. In spite of all the immense machinery of divine redemptive power at work in the world, not a soul would be brought to God if men did not bestir themselves to carry the gospel to their fellow-men. This is God's method. Thus, and in no other way, His kingdom comes and His will is made to be done on earth.

Now in this method of God's redemption the natural is included. The disorder of nature has come as the result of sin, the natural evil as the result of the spiritual evil. The restoration or redemption of nature is to follow the same order. It will come as the result of increasing righteousness, the redemption of nature as the result of the

spiritual redemption. And from the nature of the case this must be a slow and long-protracted process. For men are so linked together through heredity and in their social relations that the spiritual renovation only gradually effects the physical renovation. Yet it is surely progressing as the race is more and more permeated with the Christian life. Disease is slowly diminishing as men grow better. The length of life is increasing. The progress is doubtless slow enough, but it is none the less real. Christianity is teaching men a new conception of their duty to their own bodies and to the world about them. It is indeed true that we owe the advance in large degree to civilization and science. But we can never adequately explain it unless we bear in mind that it is Christian civilization and Christian science, and that outside of the influence of Christianity civilization and science have accomplished no such results. Slowly men are getting their rightful control over nature and using their dominion to advance the welfare of the individual and the race. And in spite of the many abuses and injustices that prevail, I do not doubt that under the influence of Christianity the physical well-being and happiness of men is steadily increasing, from century to century, if not from year to year.

We are prepared, then, to understand why the miracles were not continued. It was not needful and it was not best. God never intended thus to restore the disturbed order of nature. But a few sick folk were healed by Christ. Scarcely a ripple was made on the sea of human misery. Only here and there an unfortunate, like the blind man the Saviour healed, was selected, that the works of God should be made manifest in him. What was intended was to give men by a few striking examples the assurance that in the divine redemption all nature was included, the disordered human body and the disordered world. But the process was to be slow and by the opera-

tion of natural law, and the consummation was to be reached only in the world to come. To give this pledge, a few instances were all that were needed. It was enough that men should perceive the powers of the world to come. Nothing would have been gained, so far as God's purpose was concerned, by repeating the miracles in every age. It would have been merely to make them common and therefore unmeaning. It would have been as needless as to send the Master or the apostles in every age to repeat the gospel which was once for all given to the world in that first age.

Moreover, it is far better for us that the miracles, especially the miracles of healing, should not continue. As things are at present, the disorder of nature is not an unmixed evil. It is the check which God has placed upon sin, and the means by which He disciplines men in holiness. The chief incentives to the acceptance of God's grace and to perseverance in His service come from the suffering and sickness and death which are in the world.

We have no evidence that the men and women whom Christ healed when he was on earth were made better Christians than those upon whom he performed no miracles. That which alone has intrinsic value in the world is spiritual health. The physical well-being is of use only when it is in the service of holiness. And as things are, it is better that men should suffer and better that they should die. It is better that they should through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Enough if they have the assurance that in the sequel, when all sin shall have ceased, all suffering and sickness and death and all the disorders of nature shall also cease. Enough if, as the world grows better, they see the spiritual redemption slowly but surely drawing the physical redemption after it.

What, then, is the lesson of the miracles? It is a lesson of faith. It is said of Christ when in his own country

that he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief. If we are to use the miracles aright we must neither distrust their reality nor be credulous as to their continuance. What is needful is that we have that insight into their purpose which will enable us to see their essential place in God's redemptive revelation, and that sure trust in God's promise which will make us certain in all the darkness of this world of the final and glorious completeness of God's redemption. For surely God's kingdom will come and His will be done on earth, and the earth shall be His once more, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

V.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

WHEN Paul spoke of the Jewish Scriptures as "The holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. iii. 15), the new Testament was in process of formation, and no one at that time imagined that it was to take its place by the side of the Old. Yet if the Apostle had realized what was to come, he would not have hesitated to use the same language, with even stronger emphasis, of the whole Bible. We may, then, appropriately employ his words to introduce the subject of the present discussion—the Holy Scripture of the Christian Church.

I. Our first inquiry respects the nature and general characteristics of the Bible. What manner of book is it?

We speak of it as a book or the Book. But in reality it is not a single book, but rather a whole library. It is composed of sixty-six different books, dealing with a great variety of subjects, and emanating from different periods. Of these books the first thirty-nine belong to the history of the Jewish nation during the period antecedent to the final and complete loss of their political independence. They are written in Hebrew. They constitute the larger part of the religious literature of the Jewish people. They are sacred books at the present time to both the Jews and the Christian church. The other twenty-seven belong to the century which began with the birth of Christ. They are written in Greek, at the time of their composition the language of common intercourse among the different races

who were united under the sway of the Roman Empire. These books are peculiar to Christianity. They constitute the major part of the religious literature of the apostolic church.

But the Bible is not a mere random collection of ancient books. Many as are the centuries over which they extend, widely diverse as are the topics they discuss, one common subject runs like a golden thread through them all, and binds them into a perfect unity. They all treat in some way or other of God's redemptive revelation, and of the establishment of His kingdom in the world. Some deal with the revelation in its historical aspects. Some give us the divine law, and exhibit the revelation as it was embodied in the institutions of the Jewish Theocracy. Some record the inspired messages of prophets and apostles. Some reflect the pious life produced by the redemptive revelation. Others still describe the life and deeds and teachings of the incarnate Word, the culmination of the divine self-manifestation, the visible presence of the divine redemption. Others exhibit the first triumphs of the kingdom of God in the early days of the Christian church. Others disclose the future of redemption. But all are connected in some way with the one theme. Or, since Jesus Christ is the core and essence of the redemptive revelation, we may say that all relate to him—the Old Testament books typically and prophetically, the New directly.

A closer examination of this unity amid diversity—*e pluribus unum*—shows that it is an organic unity. The Bible is an organism. It is one of the great services which formal philosophy has rendered in modern times that it has given us the category of the organic as applied to spiritual things. Strictly speaking, we have here an analogy rather than an absolute truth. The organism belongs, in the full sense of the term, to the realm of non-sentient life. Unless we are to accept the view which has

been so brilliantly and plausibly pressed upon us in late years, that natural law is identical with spiritual law, we must admit as much as this. But the analogy is so close and so luminous that we may take it almost as a law. Or rather, we may say that it is only in the light of this analogy that we can fully understand the similar, though in some respects different, spiritual law. Now an organism is a whole, pervaded by a common life, of which the parts are reciprocally means and ends, and work together for a common end, in which each finds its fullest meaning and realization. The typical example is the human body, in which all the members work for the well-being of the whole. Paul employs this analogy with great power in describing the functions of the members of the Christian church (1 Cor. xii. 12). "For as the body is one," he says, "and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." Modern social and political science has applied the analogy with great success to human society, the body politic. Now it is this analogy which best explains the nature of the Bible in its unity and diversity. The redemptive revelation or the kingdom of God gives us the unity. The different books all stand related to this central principle. Each book and each division of the Bible contributes its share to the common end. And it is only by their diversity that we have that wonderful fulness and many-sidedness which are so characteristic of the Bible. Thus the Old Testament gives the preparation for the gospel and the New the fulfilment in Christ. In the Old Testament, as the old saying so strikingly puts it, the New lies latent; in the New the Old lies revealed (*In Vetere Testamento Novum latet; in Novo Vetus patet*). In the Old we have history, law, and prophecy, each throwing its particular light upon the common facts. In the New Testament, gospels, epistles, the history of the Acts, and the prophecy of the Apocalypse bring to our knowledge the divine re-

demption, each from a different point of view. The value of our fourfold Gospel has been often remarked. How much more we know of Christ because we can change our standpoint from the Synoptics to John, and from Matthew to Mark and Luke!

This organic relation of the parts of the Bible also furnishes us with a standard by which we can judge their relative importance. In one way of looking at the matter, they are of equal importance, because all are in some way contributory to the common purpose. Who shall say that any member of the body is not needful? But in another way of regarding the matter, they are of varying importance. "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (1 Cor. xii. 21). And yet no one will deny that the eye may become more important than the hand; and certainly, although one leads a maimed and imperfect life without feet, yet life is possible without them, while life without the head is impossible. So we rank the books of the Bible according to the closeness of their relation to that redemptive revelation which is the common life of all. The Gospels occupy the foremost place. If we were to be deprived of the Bible by degrees, book after book, we should doubtless leave them to the last, for they are the head and heart, the vital members of the scriptural body. They give us the essential facts of the Christian revelation. On this principle our missionaries generally begin their work of translating the Bible into the languages of the heathen to whom they minister with the Gospels, and they translate the New Testament before beginning upon the Old. In like manner they commonly take first in the Old Testament the Psalms, in which, as in no other book, the revelation of the Old Dispensation is summed up and the glories of the New anticipated. So we judge that the epistle of Paul to the Romans is of more importance than the epistle of

James, because the former stands in more direct relation to Christ and the central truths of the Christian revelation. On this principle we give a comparatively low place in the scale of importance to the book of Esther, in which the name of God is not once mentioned, or to the book of Ecclesiastes. Nevertheless, while there is this difference in relative importance, each has its place. The book of Esther supplies an important link in the history of the kingdom of God. Ecclesiastes makes clearer to us the problems and perplexities which beset religious thought during the later days of the Old Dispensation, enabling us to better understand the people to whom the redemptive revelation came, and so more clearly to comprehend the revelation itself.

We are thus prepared to state more precisely what the Bible is. It is the record of the redemptive revelation. It is not the revelation itself. It is not sufficient to say that it contains the revelation. It is the authentic document of revelation, the written reproduction of it. The transfer of facts and truths from mind to mind is made by language, and language finds its permanent form in the written document. The redemptive revelation, as we have seen in a former chapter, is a great system of facts and truths, through which men are brought to the personal experimental knowledge of God, as the God of grace. These truths and facts can be passed over from those who first received them, and experienced the revelation of which they formed a part to others only by language, and if they are to be preserved for all ages this language must find written form. Indeed, in the historical process of revelation itself, the earlier stages could be preserved and the cumulative effect secured only in this way.

But the definition just given, while it truly expresses the nature of the Bible, is too meagre to suggest the richness of the fact. The Bible is like no other record of facts or truths. All documents and books enable us to a

certain extent to live into and ourselves experience the life of which they are the expression. In history, in poetry, in philosophy, in the fiction that is true to life, we are taken out of ourselves and made partakers of the thoughts and experiences of other persons, and it may be other ages. But the Bible has the power, as no other book, to bring us into the heart of its subject. It is the mirror of revelation. It is almost the revelation itself, so that it need not be a matter of surprise that popular thought identifies it with the revelation. As we read it, we live the sacred history through. God is manifested to us in supernatural ways, as to the holy men of old. We sit with Abraham at the tent door as the heavenly visitants come to him. We stand with Moses, astounded, before the bush that burns and is not consumed. The woes of the royal Psalmist wring our souls. We behold with Isaiah the glory of the Lord exalted upon His throne, and the angels veiling their faces and crying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. The stern denunciations of Jeremiah sound like a clarion call in our ears. We walk to and fro with the disciples and hear the Master's words and see his wonderful works. We share the deep thoughts of the apostolic church when the Spirit descends on the day of Pentecost. And if, as we read, our hearts are open to receive the blessed influences which pervade this Book of books, we discover in our own experience the same Father, the same Saviour, the same Holy Spirit, and the forgiveness and strength and blessedness of their redemption.

II. We inquire, in the next place, what grounds we have for accepting the Scriptures as the authentic record of the redemptive revelation. Here I can speak only in generalities. The subject is too complex for me to follow it into its details.

{ The Bible, like the revelation it records, has been a growth. For the most part the records were made contemporaneously with the events to which they relate. All

history seeks the permanence of the written chronicle. Even the annals of the earth's changes and crises before the advent of man have been preserved in the strata of its rocks. Human history makes its deep impression upon the men who act in it or live while it is fresh in memory, and they are impelled to commit it to writing. The history of revelation, even though no divine provision had been made for its preservation, must needs have found its chroniclers. As it was, the same God who made the revelation secured its recording by choosing the historians and moving them to undertake the work. But the men themselves seem to have had no conception of the greatness and far-reaching importance of their task. "They builded better than they knew." Their thoughts were upon the present. They aimed to influence their contemporaries or their immediate successors. Each did his own particular task, availing himself of the occasion that presented itself, with present ends in view. Then when other generations had come upon the stage, and the events and facts which composed the revelation had become indistinct in the popular memory, these old records of God's dealings with men became precious and were sacredly preserved. Thus the Canon, or collection of sacred books, grew up, by a natural process, behind and in which we may recognize the supernatural working of the God of redemption, guiding both the individual writers and the church which gathered and guarded their writings.

We owe the Old Testament in its present form particularly to the Jewish church. To the Jews "were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 2). In all their religious and political vicissitudes they clung to the sacred books and brought them into the unity of what we call the Old Testament. The collection was complete in the form in which we now possess it at the time of Christ. We have not only the testimony of our New Testament to this effect, but that of Josephus. We can trace it still

farther back through the apocryphal book of Maccabees and the Septuagint translation into the Greek, completed in the third century before Christ. But the question is asked, Upon what grounds did the Jews admit these books into the Canon? I reply, upon weighty grounds. In the first place, the Jews of our Saviour's time stood in the line of an historical tradition running back to the beginnings of the Hebrew nation. These writings were directly connected with that history. Many of their authors were among the great national heroes. Again, these books all stood in a direct and organic connection with the great system of redemptive revelation, upon which the religious faith and institutions were founded. Once more, these writings disclosed, as they do to-day, the immediate impression of the divine Spirit under whose influence they were composed. I do not assert that all three of these tests could be applied to every book of the Old Testament, or that any of them were applied in a scientific way. But they do seem to have been employed in such a way as practically to accomplish the result. And here I may mention the fact that Christ gave his sanction to our present Old Testament. It is not necessary to suppose, in order to be loyal to the Saviour's divinity, that he solved all the problems of Biblical criticism by mere omniscience.

But we can scarcely suppose that he who was himself the perfect revelation of God, who possessed the Spirit without measure, and whose religious life was nourished by the study of the Old Testament, could have fallen into any serious error respecting the record of the preparatory stages of the revelation which culminated in himself. In saying this I do not mean that when Jesus speaks of Moses as the author of the Law, he settled the difficult questions respecting the authorship of the Pentateuch. In such matters he may have merely reflected the opinion of his contemporaries. What I mean is, that he must

have judged with practical certainty between the authentic record of revelation and extraneous writings.

The early Christians accepted the Old Testament from the Jews, but not without subjecting it to tests of their own. They found Christ in it. They knew that it was able to make them "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. iii. 15). At first it was their only Bible. The writings which compose our present New Testament came into existence without observation and with no thought on the part of their authors that they were forming another collection of sacred writings. The occasions upon which they were written were for the most part of merely local importance. Apostles and apostolic men committed to writing the current stories of Christ's words and works. One narrated the history of the early church and the missionary work of Peter and Paul. Others wrote letters of counsel and instruction to the infant churches. Then, when the generations which knew the apostles and the first work of the church had passed off the stage, and it became needful to have an authentic record of the Christian revelation, these books were gathered and added to the Old Testament. And here again the grounds upon which they were admitted to the Canon were strong and decisive. There was an historical tradition which traced these books directly back to the apostles and their companions. These were the books which stood in organic connection with the revelation itself. In them the spiritually-minded Christian recognized the presence of the Spirit of God.

Both in the Old Testament and the New there were certain books which were for a time in doubt, like Ezekiel and Ecclesiastes in the former, and the epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse in the latter. In each of these cases there were difficulties in the way of an immediate judgment. But ultimately the church decided to accept them on the ground of the principles to which ref-

erence has been made. So the church has wavered in its attitude toward the so-called Apocrypha both of the Old Testament and the New ; but with regard to these books also a final decision was reached in their exclusion from the Biblical Canon.

But it must not be supposed that we accept the Bible to-day upon the authority of the church, ancient or modern. That authority has its weight, as it ought to have. But we have other tests. Christian scholarship subjects the Bible, as a whole and in its parts, to the proof of historical and literary criticism, and shows that better grounds can be given for the acceptance of the books which compose it than for most works of ancient profane literature. I do not say that Biblical criticism has left all our old notions of the authorship and composition of the Biblical books undisturbed. Thus, to take a single instance, even conservative scholars now generally admit that the Pentateuch is largely made up of earlier documents and that Moses cannot be called its author in the original sense in which he was formerly supposed to be such. But Biblical criticism has amply sustained the authenticity of the Bible as a whole and the right of the individual books to a place in the Canon. Then the Christian to-day goes to the Bible with a personal knowledge of the reality of the revelation it records, as well as of the results it has accomplished in the world, and this knowledge is a most cogent evidence for the authenticity of the book which narrates the history of the entrance of that revelation into the world. It is the book which brings him the gospel, which shows its power to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. It is the guide-book which leads us to Christ and along the path of the Christian life to the blessedness of heaven. The more we use it, the more does it prove itself true in the test of practice, as it has proved itself true in the experience of God's children in all ages. There is no

test of a guide-book like this, that it leads us to the land we seek and carries us safely through it, so that its second-hand knowledge brings us to first-hand knowledge and is verified by that first-hand knowledge. And then, the Christian to-day who is led by the Spirit of God recognizes in the Bible the work and the presence of that Spirit.

III. We ask now respecting the necessity of the Bible. And here the answer is to a considerable degree anticipated. The Scriptures are essential to the highest spiritual well-being of the individual Christian and the church.

We have been careful in our discussions to distinguish between the redemptive revelation and the Scriptures which record it. The distinction is a most important one for many reasons. There have been considerable periods in the history of God's people when important portions of the revelation have been unrecorded and yet have done their work upon the hearts of men. A hundred years passed before our New Testament was generally accepted, during which time the revelation lived in oral tradition, and thousands of souls were converted and saved by it. We might even conceive of circumstances under which the same thing could occur to-day. Our missionaries generally make converts before they translate the Scriptures. And yet, for the normal existence and growth of Christianity, the Scriptures are a necessity. It is not enough that souls should be brought to Christ; it is needful that they should be brought in the right way. It is not enough that they should acknowledge Christ in their lives; they should be built up in right Christian character and brought to do, in right and fruitful ways, the work of God's kingdom. Granting that men might have a genuine knowledge of God's revelation in Christ through personal experience without the agency of the Scriptures, that knowledge would inevitably be one-sided, imperfect, and even, in many of its elements, false. Christians do

not by the new birth spring immediately into perfectness, either of character or knowledge. Sin and the spiritual, moral, and intellectual disturbance which sin produces still remain in greater or less measure in every Christian. The spiritual eye of the best Christian is near-sighted and wrong-sighted. Hence the need of a standard and guide by which the individual imperfections and errors may be corrected. This the Bible affords. Here the redemptive revelation is given in its primitive simplicity. It is portrayed by men who were supernaturally guided by God and guarded, so far as the revelation itself was concerned, from the false and one-sided views into which ordinary men fall, by the prophets and apostles, by the Christ himself. Take the individual Christian life to-day in its normal and best form, and you find it owes its origin and its growth to the Bible. The true Christian is the Bible Christian. He glories in his Christian experience. He would not exchange it for forty thousand Bibles. But he knows that the Bible first brought him into that experience and that it has nourished and sustained it. And so he does not put his individual experience above the Bible, but rather aims to correct and shape it by the Bible. He is like the near-sighted man, who rejoices that he sees out of his own eyes and would not give his own sight in exchange for any stories of others or help of books, yet who corrects his defects of vision by the assistance of better eyes than his.

And if the Bible is so important to the individual, still more to the Christian church. It is doubtful whether there ever would have been a church, after the first Christian century had passed away, if there had not been a Bible. It is on the Bible that the church is based and to the Bible that it owes its continued existence. In all the controversies, doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and moral, which have torn Christendom since the days of the apostles, controversies which have often threatened to destroy its very

existence, the Bible has been the rallying-point of all true Christians. The Bible view has always triumphed in the } end. Who can tell into what vagaries of doctrine and } practice the church might have run, and, humanly speaking, would have run, had it not been for the Bible standing like a rock in the midst of the waves of controversy and maintaining the unchanging and perfect truth of God! So the errors into which the church has fallen, and in which so large a section of the church is still involved, arose from the neglect or subordination of the Bible. When the Roman church put tradition and the authority of the church upon the same level with the Bible it made certain all the abuses and errors of its later career. And when Protestantism came forth from Romanism, it vindicated its right of existence and its claim to be the true representative of the universal church by planting itself upon the sole authority of the Bible. When to-day, or in any age, Christians place a creed, or a theology, or a form of government, or a mode of worship on a level with the Bible, they fall away from the true Christian and Protestant position. The Christian consciousness has its importance and its inalienable rights. But whether it be the consciousness of the individual or the collective consciousness of the church, it is human and subject to error, and it must be measured and judged by the standard of the Bible.

IV. This brings us, in the last place, to consider the authority of the Bible. What do we mean when we give the Bible this high place? The reproach is often cast upon Protestants of having put a book in the place of the Pope and church, a "paper Pope," to whose authority they bow with a superstition quite equal to that of their Romish fellow-Christians. But the charge rests upon an entire misapprehension of the Protestant position. When we call the Bible the supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice, we are not exalting the Bible as a

book, but as a record of God's redemptive revelation. The authority to which we bow is not that of a book or of our fellow-men, but of God Himself. As the Westminster Confession says, "God alone is Lord of the conscience" (Confession of Faith, ch. xx., sec. 2). Or, as Paul puts it, "There is no authority but of God" (Rom. xiii. 1, see Greek). It is because the Bible brings us God's self-revelation in authentic and original form that we submit ourselves to it as our highest guide. Especially it is because the Bible gives us the mind of Christ, our Divine Lord and Saviour, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, that we accept it as our authority. But the Bible as a mere book has no authority. We bow in allegiance to the ever-living Father, the present Christ, the indwelling Spirit, whom we see working in the world about us for the redemption of mankind, whose gracious communion and efficiency form a part of our own experience. It is because the Bible reveals them to us, because it gives us the history of their redemptive grace, and so makes known their will and interprets our experience to us, that we acknowledge it as our supreme rule of faith and practice.

The sober-minded Protestant Christian is, therefore, not a Bible-worshipper. His Bible is a means, not an end. It is worth just as much to him as it gives him of God Himself. It is an authority to him as the chart and the "Nautical Almanac" are to the mariner, when they enable him to make a good landfall. When the traveller stands upon the Gorner Grat, with that never-to-be-forgotten sea of frozen billows rising before him, the panorama in his guide-book is his authority just in so far as it enables him to identify the details in the scene upon which he is gazing.

Hence the importance, if the authority of the Bible is to be recognized in its true meaning, of correct principles of interpretation. It is possible so to abuse the Script-

ures that they are misleading rather than helpful. How often theologians have been guilty of this misuse, making the Bible support their theories, to the utter disregard of its real meaning! No wonder that the notion has become widely prevalent that the Scriptures can be made to teach anything. How often indolent Christians, who prefer to cull a few proof-texts here and there rather than to search the Scriptures, have allowed themselves to become entangled in erroneous views of God and His truth! "The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose," and even the children of God allow themselves to be imposed upon by his exegesis. If the Bible is to be our authority, we must study it faithfully and rightly. Let us briefly glance at the requisites for its understanding.

We must study it under the guidance of God's Spirit. The revelation with which it is concerned is spiritual, and both revelation and record for their right apprehension require spiritual discernment. The first qualification of the Bible student, as of the theologian, is the prayerful frame which seeks direction from the Author of truth. Augustine laid down the principle that faith must precede knowledge (*Fides præcedit intellectum*), and certainly it holds good with respect to study of the Scriptures. He who will understand a work of art must have something of the artist's spirit. He who will understand God's revelation as it is recorded in the Bible must have God Himself for his Teacher.

We need to study the Bible in the light of the experience and teachings of the Christian church. If we reject the authority of the church, it does not follow that we are to reject its helpful guidance. Eighteen centuries of Bible study lie behind us, and although many mistakes have been made, to a great extent an understanding has been reached of the true meaning of the Bible, and reached by both theoretical and practical ways. We cannot afford to ignore the fund of Scriptural knowledge which has thus

been gathered. In the great essentials a far larger degree of unanimity has been reached than is commonly supposed. We do not to-day approach the Bible as discoverers in a new land; we are passing over ground every foot of which has been trodden a million times by eager feet.

We must study the Bible closely and critically, according to the methods we employ in the interpretation of other books. When we treat it as a mere collection of oracles, to be taken separately and at random, apart from their context and without reference to the purpose of the book in which they occur, we degrade the Bible and show disrespect to Him whose revelation it brings to us. There are difficulties in the way of understanding the Scriptures arising from the fact that they were written in languages strange to us, and under circumstances very different from ours. But these difficulties may be surmounted, even by the ordinary reader who is unacquainted with the original tongues, with far less labor than is generally supposed. Let us honor the Bible by coming to it with the confidence that it is a rational book and that it can be understood if we read it in rational ways. Surely we shall not be put to shame.

And then, we must study the Bible with the recognition of the historical and progressive character of the revelation it records. When we seek for the divine authority which it conveys to us we shall remember that the redemptive revelation was made "by divers portions and in divers manners" (Heb. i. 1). The Old Testament has not the same authority for us that the New has, because the higher revelation of the latter modifies, and renders to some extent superfluous, that of the former. So in the New Testament, there are many things that are to be explained in the light of local and temporary exigencies, and we in our different circumstances must exercise wise discrimination to distinguish the principle

from the precept, the eternal truth from its ephemeral form.

But he who studies the Bible faithfully, using all spiritual and rational means for its understanding, will not fail to find in it the authority he needs for his guidance in this world and his assurance of blessedness in the next. More and more it will be "a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path" (Ps. cxix. 105). By its aid he will be brought into the presence and counsel of God and enabled to become a fellow-laborer with Him in building up His kingdom. Let us pray that this may be so with all of us. And let us also pray that the church of Christ may return with more simplicity and humility to the position of primitive Christianity and primitive Protestantism, the sole authority of the Word of God as given to us in the Bible. The words of the Westminster Confession of Faith (chap. i., sec. 10) deserve to be written in letters of gold :

"The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture."

VI.

INSPIRATION

IN the chapter on the Holy Scriptures I purposely refrained from touching upon the subject of their inspiration—partly because there are advantages in considering the Bible as a record of revelation before raising the question whether any special divine influence was exerted in its composition, and partly because the great importance of the doctrine of inspiration makes it worthy of a separate treatment. To this subject we shall now address ourselves. Unquestionably it involves especial difficulties. No Christian doctrine is at the present time more widely discussed. It is a stumbling-block to unbelievers and a perplexity to many earnest Christians. Even Christian theologians, while generally admitting that there is a true sense in which the biblical authors were inspired, differ widely in their explanations of what inspiration was. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to approach the subject with modesty and candor, not for the purpose of confirming our preconceived opinions, but with the earnest desire to discover the truth and a hearty reliance upon the Spirit of truth.

I. We are met at the outset by the fact that the Scriptures, through which we gain our chief knowledge of the nature and circumstances of the redemptive revelation, teach a doctrine of inspiration much broader than that which we designate as the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures. The former is the generic doctrine; the latter is a special case under it. We need for the proper

understanding of the scriptural inspiration a knowledge of inspiration in the broader sense.

From the beginning of His redemptive revelation God worked through chosen instruments. His purpose was to save man by men. We have seen, when dealing with the subject of revelation, how these men were selected and educated for their work. Agencies natural and supernatural were brought to bear upon them to fit them for the parts God had for them to play in the establishment of His kingdom. But it was not sufficient that they should be trained until their souls were provided with the requisite natural and spiritual qualifications. The work was one for which human powers would not suffice. It was needful that there should be a supernatural equipment. God Himself, through the Holy Spirit, must act in and through them, not as God ordinarily works by means of second causes, but with a direct access and efficiency of the First Cause. This was inspiration. We may define it as an official endowment with the Holy Spirit for ends connected with the redemptive revelation or the establishment of God's kingdom. It belonged to the first introduction of the redemptive revelation into the world. It ceased when this was completed. Whatever tasks were necessary to the full carrying out of God's plan of revelation might have this special influence of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, to look first at the Old Testament, Moses was endowed for his work as the deliverer, lawgiver, and ruler of Israel. The power by which he made known God's will to the Chosen People and to Pharaoh, and by which he performed the great miracles of judgment and redemption, was the extraordinary and supernaturally given power of God (Ex. iii. 11, 12, iv. 1-23). He is said to have been possessed of the divine Spirit (Numb. xi. 17 seq.). The judges were inspired to govern Israel and fight her battles in the age of demoralization which followed the conquest of the Promised Land. We are told that Gid-

eon, Jephthah, and Sampson performed their deeds of valor, by which the nation's life was preserved and God's redemptive work forwarded, by the power of the Holy Spirit (Judges vi. 24, xi. 29, xiii. 25). Three classes of functionaries represented God in the Theocracy, mediating between Him and His people, carrying out His redemptive work and establishing His kingdom—prophets, priests, and kings. They were all men specially endowed for their work; at least this was the case when they were faithful to their office. Their endowment with the Holy Spirit was symbolized by their anointing, the solemn consecration setting them apart to their work. The divine Spirit was given to Saul when he was anointed and manifested its presence by the gift of prophecy. When he proved unfaithful, the Spirit was taken from him and given to David (1 Sam. x. 6, xvi. 13). The typical instance of Old Testament inspiration is that of the prophets. They were God's especial confidants and organs. They received His messages and made them known to men. In many cases they were empowered to perform miracles. Occasionally the conduct of the government was committed, for a longer or shorter time, to their hands. To them the divine Spirit was given in especial measure. They were by way of eminence the "men of the Spirit" (Hos. ix. 7, see Hebrew). Everywhere in the Old Testament their prophetic power is ascribed to the Holy Spirit (Numb. xi. 25-27; 1 Sam. xix. 23, 24; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2; Neh. ix. 20, 30; Ezek. ii. 2; Zech. vii. 12; Mic. iii. 8). But the inspiration of the prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Dispensation was imperfect, and, as time went on, there emerged in the prophetic consciousness the presentiment of a complete realization of the ideal of inspiration in the Messiah (Is. xi. 2, xlii. 1, lxi. 1), while far off upon the utmost horizon of inspired vision appeared the assurance of a wonderful outpouring of the Spirit upon the church of the future (Joel ii. 28, 29).

We pass to the New Testament doctrine of inspiration. The Saviour came. In him the prophetic predictions were fulfilled. At his baptism he was set apart for his redemptive work. God gave His approval. The descending dove and the baptism with water symbolized the gift of the Holy Spirit by which he was endowed for his work. This was the anointing, the official capacitation for his redemptive ministry, by which he was recognized as the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One, the divinely human Prophet, Priest, and King (Matt. iii. 16 and parallel passages). He possessed the Spirit without measure (John iii. 34). In his inaugural address in the synagogue at Nazareth he appropriated the Old Testament prophecy of his inspiration (Luke iv. 18; cf. Is. lxi. 1 seq.). All his messianic work was done through the Spirit, his preaching, his miracles, his sacrificial death, his resurrection. He alone of all God's servants, since he was at once Son of God and perfect man, was the perfect medium of the Spirit. He was himself the perfect revelation of God.

The instruments of Christ in the founding of the church and the first work of the kingdom were the twelve apostles. Comparatively early in his ministry the Saviour began to promise them the special indwelling of the Spirit to capacitate them for their work. When they were brought before kings and governors, he told them, they should not take heed what they should say, for the Spirit should give them the needed utterance (Matt. x. 16-20 and parallel passages). But most clearly and fully were his promises of the Spirit given them in that tender and wonderful discourse which followed the Last Supper, and which John has recorded. The Saviour himself must leave them. They could not understand his person or do his work while he was with them. But after his death and ascension the Holy Spirit was to be given them as his representative and their helper, the Paraclete. He would

equip them for their work, taking the things of the risen Christ and giving them to them, leading them into all the truth, bringing to their remembrance all that Christ had said unto them, revealing the things to come. Through them He would convince the world of sin and righteousness and judgment (John xiv. 16, 17, 26, xv. 26, 27, xvi. 7-15). The deepest view of this last discourse regards it as intended primarily for the apostles and their associate workers for the kingdom in the first age of Christianity, and only secondarily, like an overflowing cup, for the Christians of the coming ages. The Saviour's promises began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. The visible symbols of that marvellous occasion may be compared with the audible voice and descending dove at the baptism of Christ. The real event was the invisible outpouring of the Spirit, by which the church was capacitated for its work of converting the world to Christ. The tongues of fire and the speaking in strange languages were emblems of the work the apostles and their companions had to do, the conquest of mankind by the foolishness of preaching. The descending Spirit brought gifts unto men from the risen Christ (Eph. iv. 8), some supernatural, some natural. So far as He dwelt in the early Christians supernaturally they were inspired. Paul has given us in the epistles to the Corinthians and the Romans a full account of these *charisms*, or gifts of grace (1 Cor. xii.-xiv.; Rom. xii.). They were of the nature of the gifts bestowed upon the Old Testament prophets, official endowment for work connected with the redemptive revelation. They were partly supernatural, as we have said, and partly natural. So far as the work required more than the natural powers of the first teachers of Christianity could accomplish, the supernatural inspiration, with its supernatural powers, was given. In the strength of it the apostles and apostolic men proclaimed the gospel, received revelations from God, wrought miracles. Paul could say of his

gospel, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. ii. 13). The foundation work of the New Dispensation was done by inspired men.

Before leaving this branch of our subject we must briefly answer the question, What was the nature of this inspiration of which the Bible gives such abundant account? We have seen that, first of all, it was distinctively supernatural. On this point no one who reverently studies the facts can have the slightest doubt. This was not the working of human genius, even in its highest exercises. Neither was it that gracious illumination and power of the Holy Spirit granted to Christians in all ages. Take the miracles as affording a crucial test. Genius and spiritual capacity are utterly incapable of explaining them. They were performed through the supernatural aid of the Holy Spirit. The same may be said of prophecy, though the proof is not at first so evident. Nevertheless, inspiration did not suppress the individuality of the inspired man. He was not like the heathen mantic, or his modern congener the spiritualistic medium, in whom the personal consciousness is either entirely destroyed or reduced to a minimum. He was the free, self-conscious agent of the divine purpose, a fellow-laborer with God, working with intelligent and sympathetic co-operation under the direction of his Master. His natural talents and spiritual capacities, instead of being suppressed, were the indispensable basis and condition of his inspiration. The same Spirit of God who dwells in every man as the source of all natural endowments, and dwells in the pious soul as the motive power of all spiritual illumination, sanctification, and activity, dwelt in the inspired soul, a soul of high natural gifts and religious attainments, to qualify it for great tasks connected with the introduction of the redemptive revelation into the world. The prophet was never more himself than when he was under the influence of the divine

Spirit. All his powers were quickened and elevated. It was an anticipation of that true relation to God which shall come when sin has ceased and the normal and ideal manhood has been attained by redemption. Yet it is to be noted that while inspiration rendered the inspired man capable of performing the special task connected with revelation, receiving and communicating truth, working miracles, predicting the future, governing God's people, or whatever it might be, it did not render him perfect or infallible in other respects. He was not yet the perfect man, but only an imperfect, sinful, feeble servant of God, made strong for a particular task, and remaining imperfect in all matters lying outside of that task.

II. Such is the background which the general doctrine of inspiration affords us. We come now to the special subject of the inspiration of the Scriptures. Are the Scriptures inspired? that is the next question which meets us. Or it may be better to put the question in a slightly different form, namely, Were the sacred writers inspired to write the books which constitute the Bible?

In entering upon the proof that the Bible is thus inspired, let us recall what the Bible is. We have seen that it is the record of the redemptive revelation. We have also seen that it is a complex whole, an organism consisting of many members. We must bear this constantly in mind in discussing the question of its inspiration. The method of procedure often followed is precisely the opposite. The Bible is treated as if it was a mere random mass of ancient literature, of which the parts stand in no real connection with each other. A single book is taken, out of its relation with the rest, and the question is asked, Is it inspired? And if, as may readily be the case, the book happens to be one which is somewhat remotely connected with the central facts of the redemptive revelation, the conclusion is hastily drawn that there is no such thing as Scriptural inspiration. But no

method could be more false than this. Our starting-point must be from the Bible as a great organized whole, and each part must be judged in relation to the whole. Who can understand a single member of the body if it is viewed as a mere mass of bone and flesh without reference to the organism of which it forms an integral part? Who shall determine the question whether any portion of the body contains the common life, if it be examined alone and by itself? If we have good reason to believe that the Bible in its unity is an inspired book, we shall have comparatively little difficulty in dealing with its component parts.

Now the Bible, as we know with the greatest certainty, was for the most part written by the very men whom we also know to have been inspired in the more general sense, that is, by men who were God's instruments in performing the great tasks of His kingdom, and for this purpose were under a special influence of His Spirit. As regards the Old Testament, some uncertainty surrounds the question of authorship. As we have seen reason to believe, it has undergone several recensions and its books were not all originally in their present form. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that by far the larger part of the Old Testament was composed by inspired men, such men as Moses, David, and the prophets, men who certainly were inspired for other purposes. So far as the New Testament is concerned, the writers were almost exclusively of this class. They were either apostles or companions of the apostles, whom we know to have shared the apostolic inspiration. Now, of course, it is possible that these men were only inspired for other purposes, to reveal God in word and deed, or perhaps only to understand and receive the revelation and to perform the miracles by which it was outwardly authenticated. It is possible that we are to call the Bible inspired only in the sense that its more important parts are the work of men thus inspired, so that

the inspiration belongs primarily to the revelation, and only secondarily and indirectly to the record. And yet, when we consider the importance of the Bible, that it was to be in all ages, after the first, the rule of faith and practice, both for the individual and the church, that it was to be the source of the Christian's knowledge of the revelation in its primitive and normal form, it would be strange if this most important element in the redemptive revelation, this means by which its work was to be carried on in all the Christian ages, was not the result of a special and supernatural influence of God's spirit in the men who composed the biblical books. Otherwise inspiration would seem to fail just where it was most needed. These considerations afford a strong presumption for the inspiration of the Scriptures in a primary rather than in a merely secondary and indirect sense.

But to pass from presumptive to positive proof. The Bible itself bears evidence of having been prepared under such a special influence of the Holy Spirit. Consider the relation of the parts to the whole. It was scarcely possible that the writers, left to their own unassisted powers, should prepare books which derived their chief value from their relation to others of which these writers were wholly ignorant. Yet nothing is more evident to the thoughtful reader of the Scriptures than that this is the case. The inspiration of some of the books, as, for example, the book of Esther, seems to have consisted just in this, that their writers were capacitated by the Spirit to forge just the link that was needed for a certain part of the great chain. Then the contents of many of the books give clear evidence of inspiration. This is the case in so far as they are themselves revelations. For revelation always manifests inspiration. Their teachings manifest a divine guidance. Take, for example, Paul's wise counsels in his epistles, going so far beyond the mere good sense of an ordinary uninspired Christian. The fact that Paul never

once trips, that he never confounds the temporary and the permanent, in these casual letters, is to my mind a strong evidence that he was inspired in writing them. Again, the form of the biblical writings bears in many cases evidences of inspiration. I do not believe that there is any evidence of what is commonly called verbal inspiration, that is, of the dictation of the very words of the Scripture by the Holy Spirit. But I cannot doubt that the language bears the marks of the inspiring God, that here is a sacred language, which in its plastic state was moulded by the Spirit who was guiding these men in the composition of the most wonderful book that was ever written. And then there is this significant fact, that just in proportion as a Christian is led by the Spirit of God does he recognize the presence of the Spirit in the Bible in these and other ways. It has "spiritual things for spiritual men" (1 Cor. ii. 13). And in saying this, I do not mean merely that they find a revelation in it, but that it discloses itself to them as itself in a true sense divine.

I have left till the last the testimony which the Bible furnishes respecting its inspiration. The scriptural authors say very little of the circumstances under which they composed their books. In a few instances we discover a divine direction to write (Ex. xvii. 14, xxxiv. 27, 28; Numb. xxxiii. 2; Deut. xxxi. 19; Is. viii. 1, xxx. 8; Jer. xxx. 1, 2, xxxvi. 2; Ezek. xxiv. 1, 2; Rev. i. 19). But these are the exception rather than the rule. It is only when we come to the New Testament, and read the language of Christ and the apostles respecting the Old Testament Scriptures, that we have clear and explicit testimony. There can be no doubt, it seems to me, that our Saviour regarded the Hebrew Scriptures as inspired. The formula, "It is written," with which he appeals to the Old Testament, shows that he regarded its teachings as authoritative. He directly asserts the inspiration of David in the composition of the Psalms (Matt. xxii. 43). It is the Scripture which

X he says cannot be broken (John x. 35). The apostles also constantly quote the Old Testament with formulas which evidence their belief in its inspiration, "The Holy Ghost saith," "God saith by the mouth of His servant," and the like (Acts i. 16, iv. 25; Rom. xvi. 26; 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10; Heb. iii. 7, ix. 8). Paul declares that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4). Peter is speaking of the Scripture when he says that "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). In the great proof passage (2 Tim. iii. 16) the context clearly shows that when the apostle affirms that "every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness," he is speaking of the Old Testament as a whole.

It may be admitted that the New Testament does not vouch for its inspiration in the same strong terms which it employs with reference to the Old. The writers were not aware that they were doing a work so important and far-reaching in its effects. But we shall not forget the Saviour's promise of the Spirit to lead them into all the truth, and to bring to remembrance the things which he had told them. We can hardly suppose that these promises failed of their fulfilment when the gospels and epistles were written. And in several instances, at least, the writers use language which betrays their consciousness of inspiration (1 Thess. ii. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 13-15; 1 John i. 3, 4; see also Eph. ii. 20). In 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16 the Pauline epistles are declared to have been written through a divinely imparted wisdom, and are placed on a level as "Scriptures" with the books of the Old Testament.

X For these reasons we do not hesitate to affirm the inspiration of the Bible. We make this affirmation of the

Bible as a whole and of its parts as well. In doing this we do not affirm the same kind or degree of inspiration in all its parts. We do not affirm that the men who wrote the Bible and the men who collected the books into the Canon received the same divine assistance. Our contention is that God's Spirit presided in supernatural ways over the composition and formation of the sacred Book of the Christian religion.

III. The most difficult portion of our subject is still to be investigated. What was the nature of the inspiration of the Bible? What were its limitations? And here we shall be aided at the start by what we have learned respecting inspiration in the broader sense of the term. As the kings and prophets and apostles were capacitated by the indwelling Spirit for precisely the work in the establishment of God's kingdom which He had for them to do, so the sacred writers. Their task was to furnish an authentic and adequate record of the redemptive revelation, a record that should give to later ages as full and clear a knowledge of the introduction of that revelation into the world as it is possible for human language on the written page to furnish. This they did. We have had our attention called in the previous chapter to the adaptedness of the Bible to its purpose. Was there ever a book written which had the power so to carry the mind back into the past and to make it fresh and real? The mingling of the historical and the didactic, the skilful adjustment of prose to poetry, of ethics to theology, of sentiment to high reasoning, the fulness, clearness, and many-sidedness of the narration and exposition make the Bible wholly unique among books, whether religious or secular. The inspiring Spirit working through the human instruments made it the book it is, able to make the individual wise unto salvation, and to build up the church on its most holy faith. Wherever we look, we see in it the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

If, now, we look at the human instruments employed, there is every reason to conclude that they, like the organs of inspiration in the broader sense, did their work as the free, self-conscious fellow-laborers with God, rather than as passive tools in His hands. There have been times in the history of the Christian church when the sacred writers were supposed to have been like the unconscious instrument upon which the musician plays as he will, or at best as amanuenses to whom the Spirit dictated His message for mankind, sentence by sentence and word by word. But of such an overpowering influence there is not the slightest trace in the Bible itself. On the contrary, the sacred writers seemed to have worked in free co-operation with God. There was no suppression of personality or of individual peculiarities. Isaiah, Paul, and John write each *in propria personâ*, each with his own style and diction, each expressing the divine truth in his own forms of thought. Like the sunlight that pours in manifold beauty of coloring through the stained glass windows of some great cathedral, the divine Spirit manifests Himself in almost infinite variety and richness through the writers of the Bible.

But we must go further and ask, Did inspiration render the sacred writers infallible? The answer requires careful discrimination. Infallibility is a relative term. We ask, infallible in what respect? If the question be, did inspiration render the Scriptures a complete, adequate, true, intelligible record of revelation, so that he who studies them aright may attain to a complete and unerring knowledge of the saving truths and facts of that revelation, I should not hesitate to answer the question in the affirmative. I do not see any reason to doubt that God accomplished His purpose, and that he so guided the writers of the Bible that they were preserved from frustrating that purpose. It is sometimes said that the religious and moral contents of the Bible, or the religious and

moral truth which it teaches, are infallible. And though this statement seems to me defective, since it lays no stress upon the great historical facts which belong to the very essence of revelation, I would gladly accept it in the general sense which it is meant to convey. The Christian church has tested the Bible in this respect now for well-nigh eighteen centuries, and it has found it just what it was intended to be, with no essential fault or blemish. If it were fallible as a record of revelation, we might well despair of reaching Christian truth.

But there is another sense in which we may ask whether inspiration rendered the sacred writers infallible. Did it render them infallible in matters which lay outside the scope and purpose of their inspiration, in matters not directly connected with the revelation which they had to record, or only incidental to the record? We can easily conceive that it might have been so. But we have no right to assume that it is so until we have examined the facts. Some theologians begin with the *à priori* principle that the Bible must be absolutely inerrant, and boldly assert that this is the case, not only in matters which pertain to the great purpose, but in all matters whatsoever. But if the facts show that this was not the case, which honors God the most, to accept his method of making a Bible as the best, or to insist that He followed the method which we think best? Everyone has heard of that King Alphonso of Castile, in the thirteenth century, who is remembered chiefly for having said that had he been present at the creation he could have given the Creator some good advice about matters which he himself thought wrong. And there are not a few Alphonsos at the present time who occupy a very similar attitude toward the Bible. It seems a very good and pious thing to insist that the Bible is absolutely without error. But nothing is good or pious that is contrary to facts. Lord Bacon ("Advancement of Learning," Bk. I.) speaks of offering

"to the Author of truth the unclean sacrifice of a lie," and raises the question, *An oportet mentiri pro Deo?*—whether it is right to lie for God? Nothing has done more harm to the cause of Christianity than the well-meaning but mistaken defences which have been employed.

Now a careful examination of the facts shows that inspiration did not render the sacred writers infallible in everything, however infallible they may have been in that for which they were inspired. Let us look at the subject in detail so far as our time will permit.

1. Inspiration did not render the biblical authors scientific historians. So far as the history was essential to the revelation there is every reason to believe that they gave it accurately. But literary men had not then learned to write with that painstaking and conscientious accuracy in minor details which modern historians have attained. In this respect the sacred writers were not in advance of their age. So we find some discrepancies between them, largely in figures, some of which may be due to later transcribers, but which cannot all be thus explained (compare Numb. xxv. 9 with 1 Cor. x. 8; 1 Kings vi. 1 with Acts xiii. 20; Gen. xlvi. 26, 27 with Acts vii. 14; 2 Sam. xxiv. 9 with 1 Chron. xxi. 5; 2 Chron. xxiv. 20 with Matt. xxiii. 35). Matthew, by a slip of the pen or a confusion of thought, quotes a passage as from Jeremiah which is really from Zechariah (compare Matt. xxvii. 9 with Zech. xi. 12, 13). A typical instance is the discrepancy, which never has been and probably never will be explained, between the Synoptic evangelists and John respecting the day and time of the Last Supper.

2. Inspiration did not render the sacred writers scientists and philosophers. No good end would have been accomplished by pushing them thus in advance of their age. They use the language of contemporary belief respecting the world and the human soul. Only in those instances

where revelation and science occupy common ground do we find them rising to the level of more recently discovered truth.

3. Inspiration did not render the sacred writers scientific interpreters of the Old Testament. The New Testament authors were profoundly convinced of the inspiration of the Old Testament. They believed that it was throughout, in virtue of the revelation which it recorded, a prophecy of Christ and the Kingdom of God. They recognized the fact that the whole history of Israel and all its institutions were fulfilled in the New Dispensation. Accordingly, they used the Old Testament with great freedom in proving the truth of Christianity. A modern exegete would be sure that he was using the exact words of the earlier writing and in the precise sense it was intended to convey. The New Testament writers took little pains to attain scholarly exactitude. Accordingly, we find that while they are right in the spirit of their quotations, there are often defects in the letter. It was an error of form rather than of substance when Matthew said, "He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene" (Matt. ii. 23). No such words are to be found in the Old Testament. But its deepest teachings relate to the rejection and humiliation of the Messiah. A careful examination of the quotations in the New Testament from the Old, must give the death-blow to the doctrine of verbal inspiration, though it will not cast doubt upon the deep spiritual understanding of the older Scriptures on the part of the apostles and apostolic writers.

4. Inspiration did not raise the men who stood on the lower planes of revelation to the position of those who occupied the higher and stood close to the Saviour. Moses does not write like Isaiah, nor Jeremiah like Paul. The tone and spirit of the imprecatory Psalms are not those of the beloved disciple. It cannot be denied that there

are evidences of a lower morality in the Old Testament than in the New. The prophets write many things which the apostles could not have written. The men of the older age stood far in advance of their uninspired contemporaries in all the essentials of their message, but they were not wholly free from the limitations of their times.

Such are some of the facts. The sphere in which they lie is not that of revelation. They belong to the circumference, not to the centre. Judged by every true criterion they are unimportant. They do not contradict inspiration. Rather they are limitations incidental to inspiration. But they are *facts*, and facts are sacred things, which no man may lightly tamper with. We must accept them and find a place for them in our doctrine of inspiration. They are like the nettle which stings and wounds when it is handled gingerly but is harmless when grasped with a strong hand. For my part, I do not regard them as difficulties in the way of the Bible, but rather as recommendations to its acceptance. I can see how the Bible can much better accomplish its purpose by not offering us infallibility in non-essentials, how thus God has made it a more human and intelligible book, and has guarded us against that worship of the letter which blinds men to the Spirit.

In conclusion, a single word about biblical criticism. It is right that Christian scholarship should reverently subject the Bible to its tests. The Bible is not like the ark of the Lord which no unconsecrated hand might touch. It is the human book made for everyday use, a book which God has not been afraid to put alongside of other books where it might be freely subjected to the test of the survival of the fittest. There is a certain sensitiveness, which has its origin in right and true feelings, about treating the Bible like other books by inquiries into its origin and history and efforts to unravel the problems of its composition. But biblical scholarship, while it has been used in the interests of unbelief, has been of untold benefit to

the Christian church. It has given to faith some of its strongest supports, and it is steadily increasing our knowledge of divine truth. Wherever there are facts there must be science. If God is a reality, we have a right to learn more of His person and His nature by every method which the resources of science supply. And if the Bible is a book at once divine and human, it must offer to a reverent science one of the most inviting and fruitful fields for research. Let us have faith in the old Bible. It is not so weak that we need fear it will get broken in the testing. We need not be afraid to subject it to the most vigorous tests. It is like the pure gold that will come out of the fire and from under the hammer uninjured. Much of the disquietude which is felt in our times respecting the work of biblical criticism arises from a tacit and unconfessed distrust in the Bible. And it will disappear when Christians come to see that the very methods which at first alarm them are leading to the complete and invincible proof of the truth and unfailing efficacy of the sacred Book.



VII.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

WE have reached the point where we pass from those preliminary topics which constitute what is called Fundamental Theology to the system of Christian doctrine or Systematic Theology. As we enter the new region, we seek some general truth which shall be to us at once a starting-point and a guide for our future investigations. This truth we find in the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. In our Saviour's teachings the kingdom was made of prime importance. He began his ministry with the proclamation, "The kingdom of God is at hand!" (Mark i. 15). It was through this truth that he linked his message with the teachings of the Old Testament. His public addresses were largely occupied with expounding the nature of the kingdom. His prophecies had reference to its ultimate triumph. The doctrine of the kingdom is the doctrine in which the teachings of the Scripture find their common center. The same may be said of the system of Christian truth. If I were asked what has been the greatest achievement of recent theology, I should say that it was the revival of this doctrine of the kingdom and its restoration to its proper place in the theological system. And not only in systematic theology has the prominence given to this truth in recent times been important. It has worked with fruitful results in the departments of Christian ethics, of Church history, and of practical theology. I have no doubt that when the Christian church once begins to realize the meaning and importance of this

great truth and fact of the kingdom, with all that is involved in it, a new era will dawn upon it. And the individual Christian also needs to understand this truth, which above all others has the power to lift men out of their selfishness and isolation into their true relation to God and Christ and their fellow-men. It is the germinal doctrine which holds in its bosom the potency and promise of all the rest. The man who understands the kingdom of God will understand all that is essential in the doctrines of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith, the new life, the last things—in a word, the system of Christian truth.

Let us pass to the examination of this great doctrine.

I. We ask, what is the meaning of the term kingdom of God. Our Saviour has given us a description, which is to all intents and purposes a definition, in the petitions which he taught his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The latter petition is explanatory of the former. The kingdom consists in the doing of God's will on earth as it is done in heaven; it comes just in proportion as this result is attained. The idea of the kingdom implies three things, a world of sin, an ideal of perfection, and a realization of this ideal in the world by means of redemption.

It implies a world of sin. Sin is the patent fact, which we need no Bible to tell us of. Here it is, and here it has been from the beginning of human history. Its existence is presupposed in all the teachings of the Scripture. That great problem which has perplexed religious and philosophical thought in all ages, the origin of evil, is discussed only incidentally and with no attempt at a complete solution. The divine eternal plan is represented as assuming the future existence of sin in the world, and as providing for it in creation, providence, and redemption. God determined to permit the sin, into which he knew that men would fall of their own free will. Certainly it

was not because he did not hate it. And however we are to explain His reasons, He meant to overrule sin for good ; may we not reverently say, for a higher good than could be attained without it ? At any rate, God's plan of the kingdom from the first presupposed the existence of sin. Men are fallen, alienated from God. They rest under His condemnation. They have lost their rights and privileges as children of God, those birthright prerogatives which belong to them in virtue of their creation in the divine image. Human society in all its ramification is permeated with sin. Its institutions all are tainted with it. The world is full of misery and suffering, the effects and the punishment of sin. The human body has become subject to death and disease. Even material nature has caught the contagion and groans and travails in pain. Beyond the death-line there are tokens of worse evils and retributions in the other world as the result of sin. It is a lost world.

The kingdom of God implies the existence of an ideal of perfection. It is the peculiarity of man that he is possessed of ideals. He has caught the secret of his true being, though he may not know how to become what he knows he was made to be. The evolutionists who explain the higher attributes of the human soul by their theory have no explanation to give of the existence in the soul of an ideal. If man has come from below, how has he discovered what lies beyond ? Why is it that he keeps asserting for himself kingly rights, though he has never had a sceptre in his hand ? What right have men like Herbert Spencer to forestall the future progress of the race by telling us of what is to be when man is perfectly evolved ? How do we know, upon their principles, that man is not already fully evolved ? According to the evolutionists sin is natural, it belongs to the stage of development which man has reached. Why, then, prate of a coming time, when moral perfection is to be attained by

the individual and society? Only theism can give us the key to the existence of human ideals; and only Christianity can take the key and open the lock. Man was made like God and for God. The law of love to God and man, to which every conscience gives more or less distinct witness, is the true law of man's being. The sinful order of things is wrong; it ought not to be. Christianity reveals the higher order. The ideal of humanity is not an imagination, but a reality. There is one realm of the universe where intelligent, moral, spiritual beings, like ourselves, live and are what they ought to be. Heaven is the ideal actualized. There God's will is done, freely, cheerfully, fully. The holy beings are in perfect communion with God. His law is written on their hearts. They are not so much subjects as children. They stand in right relations with each other. Doubtless they are in right relations with the material world.

And then, the kingdom implies a process of redemption by which the ideal is to be realized in the world. We can conceive of the kingdom without redemption. In the heavenly state the kingdom has been present since the creation. It needs not to come, for it is always present. But the kingdom, so far as we are concerned with it, is a kingdom that is to come in a world of sin. The only way in which it can thus come is by redemption. This has been God's plan from the first. We often speak of redemption as if it were an afterthought on the part of God. But it is not so represented in the Scripture. The sacred writers go into none of those harmless but useless speculations with which theologians occupy themselves, as to what would have been the state of things if man had not sinned, whether the Son would have become incarnate and the like. God was in no doubt as to what was to be. From the first redemption was in His thought. The world was created by Christ and for Christ. Believers were chosen in him before the foundation of the world.

The kingdom that was to be established was a redemptive kingdom. Men were to be rescued from sin and restored to sonship. The will of God was to be done. All the ravages of sin were to be repaired. The earth was to be made like Heaven. And as far as the kingdom has advanced it has been through a redemptive process realizing the heavenly ideal in the sinful world. We sometimes represent the progress of Christianity by a map upon which the countries where heathen beliefs prevail appear in deep shadow, while the Christian lands are in the light. To those who have watched the process from the heavenly state, the history of the world has been the slow passing of an eclipse, the steady conquest of the light over the darkness. Wherever sin remains and men are unredeemed there is deep shadow, wherever God's will is done the victorious light.

II. Next consider the founding of the kingdom.

Our Saviour began his ministry, as has been already noticed, with the proclamation that the kingdom of God was at hand. How are we to understand his words? Did the kingdom then for the first time enter the world? We often speak as if this were the case and call the Saviour's work the founding of the kingdom. But we must beware that we do not fall into error through lack of careful discrimination. If the kingdom of God exists wherever His will is done, then it must have existed from the beginning of human history. Redemption began with the Fall. From the days of Adam there has been a godly race, always some few men who walked with God and lived in the light. In this way of looking at it, the kingdom did not first enter the world when Christ came. And yet his words were true. The kingdom comes with greater and greater fulness. It came when redemption began its work among men, when Adam and Eve left their Paradise with nothing of comfort or hope but God's promise. It came in a far truer and higher sense when

Jesus Christ performed his redemptive work. In its highest and fullest sense it is still to come when Christ shall return in glory at the Last Day. We distinguish a preparatory stage, a work of foundation-laying, the progress of the fully equipped and advancing kingdom, and the final consummation.

The period of the Old Dispensation was the preparatory stage. First the kingdom was realized, partially and incompletely in individual and family life. There was no organized dominion of God, no commonwealth in which His rule was outwardly expressed. There were those who held allegiance to God, but they were scattered and disunited. Then came the founding of the nation of Israel. God chose a people to be the recipients of His grace and the instruments of His will. They were bound to Him in solemn covenant. He was their King and they His subjects and children. Here was an organized rule of God. In the Theocracy, with its religious and political institutions, the kingdom found a more perfect realization. But still it was far from complete. The Theocracy was always short of its ideal. And its ideal was not the highest. It was but an external fulfilment, at the best, of the idea of the kingdom. Its law was adapted to a comparatively low stage of religious progress. Its institutions were temporary and imperfect. Its prophets, priests, and kings failed to perform the work that was committed to them. Everything was educational and preparatory. This was the time when prophecy revealed the fact that the true kingdom of God lay in the future, that it was a spiritual kingdom, that it was to include all mankind, that the Messiah was to be its King and that it was to be based upon his redemptive work.

The foundation of the kingdom, in the full meaning of the term, was laid by Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. He taught mankind what the kingdom is, in all the depth of spiritual meaning which belongs to the idea.

In his own person the kingdom was for once fully realized on earth. He did God's will perfectly. In his person heaven was brought down to earth and the prayer he taught his disciples answered. His atoning death, by which it became morally possible for the holy God to forgive human sin and receive the sinner back to His fellowship, was in the deepest sense the foundation-laying of the kingdom. Retroactive as well as prospective in its efficacy, Christ's sacrifice was essential to the very existence of the kingdom on earth. His resurrection completed the work.

The actual work of the kingdom, in its full potency and meaning, began when Jesus the Christ, the God-man, who died and rose again, ascended into heaven and sat down as King upon his Father's throne, and when he sent his Spirit to found the church on earth. Thenceforward the kingdom was fully realized, not as yet indeed in extension but already in quality. The kingdom had come. The true reign of God had begun.

And yet we still pray, Thy kingdom come! the process is slow, the work of redemption is gradual. We wait for that second coming of the Lord when the kingdom shall be realized in its completeness, when the earth shall be the Lord's, and when at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 10, 11).

III. The organization of the kingdom is the next point which demands our attention. The kingdom is not merely the union of good men on earth in common loyalty to truth and duty. It is not merely Christianity working by its self-propagating power. It is a union of God and men. It is not an earthly order of things but a heavenly order. Its headquarters are in heaven though its work is on earth.

It is the union of heaven and earth, of the things unseen and eternal with the things seen and temporal. It is a great living palpitating organism, every part instinct with vitality.

At its head is God reigning through Christ His Son. He is the living God, omnipresent, everywhere active, the God whose power supports and governs the whole universe, material and sentient. So far as we know, the establishment of the kingdom here is His great end. If there are other ends dearer to Him, they have not been revealed to us. Natural theology, as well as Scripture, reveals to us the providential government of God. This is not the same as His government in His kingdom. The former extends to all creatures, inanimate and animate, good and evil, alike; the latter is confined to those who freely and gladly accept His sway. But the providential government of God finds its chief end in the establishment of His kingdom. The God of grace is the God of nature. He guides all things, the ongoing of nature, the movements of society, the lives of individuals, with reference to the kingdom. Christ the divinely human King is on the throne. A member of the human race holds the reins of providence, and all things work together for good to them that love God (Rom. viii. 28). And God and Christ stand in personal communion with the members of the kingdom through the Holy Spirit. Not more real is the intercourse of man with man than the intercourse of God and Christ with their fellow-laborers on earth. There are earthly governments that make themselves felt everywhere throughout their domains. No village so small, no house so remote, that the power of the king is not known, and loved or feared or hated. But such an illustration can give us but the feeblest idea of the presence and activity of God in His kingdom. However insignificant a Christian may be, if he is a true son of the kingdom, all the power of God is enlisted in his behalf and the Om-

nipotent is nearer to him than his closest friend, so that it is no wonder

“Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

Associated with God and Christ in the organization of the kingdom are the holy angels. What other interests these pure and beautiful beings may have we do not know. Only one thing has been revealed to us, their connection with the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews asks, “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. i. 14). Our Saviour tells us that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth (Luke xv. 7, 10). With the angels in the blessedness of heaven are the souls of those who have passed from the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant, the spirits of the just made perfect, who hover over us, a great cloud of witnesses watching us as we run the race set before us (Heb. xii. 1).

Finally, all good men belong to this goodly fellowship of the kingdom. They form one great brotherhood, through which that liberty, equality, and fraternity which has been the dream of earnest men in all ages is to be realized. This is the true tie that binds men together, the one tie that can never be broken. We do not begin to realize it. We do not see the invisible bonds that unite us to every true Christian the world over. But they are there all the same, and by and by we shall understand it.

IV. Let us look more carefully at the nature of the kingdom.

It is entered by the new birth. The sinful will cannot turn itself to God. It must have divine help. There must be forgiveness. The whole heart must be changed. Life has to receive a new direction. This can be accom-

plished only through faith in Christ who has made atonement for our sins and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said with an emphasis which left no room for misunderstanding, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). Thus only can the sinner become a child of God and an heir of the eternal inheritance. This is the first great doing of the will of God. It opens the way for the higher and fuller doing of that will in the progressive sanctification of the Christian life and in the service of God in the tasks of the kingdom.

The progressive nature of the kingdom has already been referred to. But it needs to be strongly emphasized. Christ likened the kingdom to the seed and the leaven. It is its nature to propagate itself, to spread from man to man, from nation to nation, from institution to institution of society. Because the divine life works in it, it cannot remain stationary. It passes from stage to stage of growth, from insignificant germs to generous blossoming and splendid fruitage. From the feebleness of the Apostolic church to the present extent and strength of Christendom its movement has been steadily onward. There have been, indeed, periods of apparent retrogression, but they have been like the recession of the waves upon the beach as the tide comes in, a gathering of strength for a new advance.

Again, the kingdom is spiritual. When Pilate questioned Jesus as to the nature of his royal office as the Messiah, his answer was, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36). As we have seen, its object is to bring heavenly principles into earthly affairs. To the Pharisees who were looking for a political redemption Jesus said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii. 20, 21). It begins in the soul and works outward. It

aims to transform the world by the power of the truth and the invisible working of the Spirit of God. It eschews all recourse to brute force. God respects the freedom of the will which he has made. He will have voluntary and cheerful service or none at all. By this test we can discover the difference between the kingdom and those false imitations of it which men set up. The Romish system has claimed that the kingdom of God and the church of Rome are identical, but it has given the lie to its claim by its use of earthly power to advance the kingdom, by its claim to temporal dominion, by its persecutions, by its denials of the rights of conscience.

Once more, the law of the kingdom is the law of love. In love to God and love to our fellow-men the divine will finds its fulfilment. This is the law which God Himself follows. When He makes it the rule for men, He calls on them to become like Himself. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him" (1 John iv. 16). Love is the communication of self to others. In its highest exercise, as we know it in the redemptive work of Christ, it is self-denial or self-sacrifice. Service is the essence of love. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 26-28).

V. Next consider the agencies which God employs in the establishment of the kingdom. Here we are met by the remarkable fact that while the whole enginery of divine power in providence and redemption is enlisted in behalf of the kingdom, yet God has so arranged things that the work is done by men. God's plan from the first has been the salvation of man by men. In all His redemptive efficiency he has used human instruments, individuals and nations. Here lies the explanation of the in-

carnation. The Word was made flesh that the Saviour might be a man. To-day a Man sits upon the throne of the universe and wields the sceptre of universal power.

We mark, however, a difference between the earlier and later stages of the kingdom's history. During the periods of preparation and foundation-laying, and during the first age of the Christian Dispensation, God employed supernatural means in the great work. This was needful in the first introduction of the redemptive revelation and the first establishment of the machinery of the kingdom. Inspiration, miracles, and the other supernatural agencies served to give the kingdom a foothold in the hearts of God's chosen ones who were to go forth and scatter the gospel seed broadcast in the world. But when the initial establishment of the kingdom was thus effected, the supernatural means became unnecessary. For God works as truly and effectively through second causes as when He sees fit in part or wholly to dispense with them, and the supernatural or miraculous, in the sense in which we are using the terms, is always employed with a wise economy. God now employs only natural agencies, through which His divine power works, and by which He accomplishes His purposes of grace. Let me repeat: God is as truly present in the natural as in the supernatural. The Holy Spirit is as really active in the Christian to-day, though subject only to His ordinary and normal influences, as in the inspired prophet or apostle eighteen hundred or three thousand years ago. And redemption is as truly a divine work when it is accomplished through the permanent and constantly efficient operations of God's grace, as when it employs a miracle to reach its end.

God has not only committed the work of the kingdom to individual Christians; he has also established certain great corporate agencies or institutions, in which individual Christians unite, and through which they accomplish their special tasks. These are what are sometimes called

the great "teleological organs" of human society. First among them may be placed the Family and the Church. So important are both, and so vitally essential to the progress of the kingdom that one is at a loss to which to give the precedence. The family is the oldest and most fundamental. It is most closely connected with the beginnings and decisive developments of moral and religious life. God honored it by making it the basis of the primitive covenant in which the redemptive work of the kingdom began. In all ages the success of the kingdom has largely depended upon whether the family has been true to the great end for which it was established. On the other hand, the church is the distinctively religious institution. It was most closely connected with the work of Christ. It is more exclusively devoted to the advancement of the kingdom through the preaching and teaching of the Gospel. The church is often identified with the kingdom of God. But this is to wholly misapprehend it. It is no more identical with the kingdom than is the family. It is true that the members of what we not very happily call the invisible church are the same as the subjects of the kingdom. But there the resemblance ends. The two stand teleologically connected. The kingdom is the end, and the church a means to that end; and it is only one means, though in some respects the most important, alongside of a number of others. We cannot use the two terms indiscriminately without falling into confusion. Test it by saying, "Thy church come!" instead of "Thy kingdom come!" Here are two altogether different ideas.

Still another of these corporate agencies, established for the advancement of the kingdom, is the State. Our secularized modern governments are so disjoined from the true ends which they should subserve that we do not readily recognize the ideal. Yet there can be no doubt in a Christian mind that the state receives its authority from God, the universal King, and that it holds it only

for the purpose of promoting the interests of the kingdom.

After these three great institutions come a number of subordinate yet scarcely less important agencies, labor, commerce, the trades and professions, science, art, literature. If they are largely used in the interests of sin, this is their abuse and not their true function. They derive their importance from their relation as means to the kingdom as an end, and the great work of redemption will not be complete till they have been consecrated to their true purpose. And meantime the work of the individual Christian will be effectual in proportion to his understanding of the relation of these agencies to the kingdom. How much, for example, the Christian man of wealth can do when he realizes that God has given him his property that he may use it for the great cause. What a new aspect science assumes, when we come to see that all its discoveries and all its manifold applications to the useful arts may be made to subserve the divine purpose of redemption.

VI. We are thus prepared to understand the true scope of the kingdom and the future that lies before it. While it is, as we have seen, a spiritual kingdom, yet it takes into its comprehensive embrace all human interests. It begins with the individual human will and works outward until, like the leaven in the mass, it has penetrated to the circumference of humanity and even to the sphere of physical nature. Redemption will not be accomplished until all the consequences of the Fall have been repaired and the race and the earth itself carried forward to the perfection for which the divine purpose destined them. Accordingly, the kingdom comes not only in the distinctively religious sphere, but also in that which we, not with entire accuracy, distinguish as the secular. The distinctively spiritual redemption ought indeed to be placed first. But we cannot stop there. The kingdom is to come in

the regeneration of society, in all its institutions, in all its corporate interests, in its spirit and tone. It is to come in the redemption of the human body from disease and the dominion of death, that great process which is to be consummated by the resurrection. It is to come in the deliverance of nature from the bondage of corruption and the restoration of the right relations between man and nature. We must, therefore, beware of too narrow a view of the kingdom. We may not confine it to the things of the church. We must recognize the fact that our Lord is King in the secular sphere as truly as in the religious, and that in this view nothing is common or unclean. The true Christianity is not that which separates itself from the world and selfishly wraps itself in the mantle of its own salvation, but that which goes out into the world in the spirit of the Master, to win it and all that is in it to him. Viewing the subject thus, we shall see that the kingdom comes not only in the additions of converts to the church and the building up of Christians in holy living, but in the establishment of better principles of business, in the equitable settlement of the relation between capital and labor, in the moral reforms by which deep-seated social vices or abuses are overcome, in the elevation of politics, in the advance of civilization, in the cessation of war, in improved sanitary arrangements in our cities, even in the prevention of cruelty to animals and the increasing sense of obligation to avoid waste and needless destruction in the use of the products of material nature. The Christian who grasps the conception of the kingdom cannot be narrow-minded. His interests are as wide as the earth itself. Perhaps no great man of modern times has so fully comprehended this truth as the missionary Livingstone. When he turned aside from the distinctively religious work of his calling to explore the unknown interior of Africa, there were many to criticise him for what seemed to them an abandonment of the ca-

reer to which he had devoted his life. His profound words, uttered apparently without a thought that he was saying anything great, deserve to be held in unfailing remembrance :

“As far as I am myself concerned, the opening of the new central country is a matter for congratulation only in so far as it opens up a prospect for the elevation of the inhabitants. . . . I view the end of the geographical feat as the beginning of the missionary enterprise. I take the latter term in its most extended signification, and include every effort made for the amelioration of our race, the promotion of all those means by which God in His providence is working, and bringing all His dealings with men to a glorious consummation. Each man in his sphere, either knowingly or unwittingly, is performing the will of our Father in Heaven. Men of science, searching after hidden truths which, when discovered, will, like the electric telegraph, bind men more closely together, soldiers battling for the right against tyranny, sailors rescuing the victims of oppression from the grasp of heartless men-stealers, merchants teaching the nations lessons of mutual dependence, and many others, as well as missionaries, all work in the same direction and all efforts are overruled for one glorious end” (“Livingstone’s Travels,” pp. 718–719).

We shall not forget that the kingdom of God is to be established here in this earth. There is a notion of the work of Christianity which always is more or less prevalent in the minds of those who hold narrow views of the kingdom, that represents the chief or only aim of redemption to get individual souls out of this world and safe into heaven. But this is not the biblical view. According to the Scriptures, the kingdom is to come *here*. This earth is to be redeemed. The human race is to be brought to Christ here. The chorus of praise is to ascend from the voices of living men in Asia and Africa and the rest of the habitable globe. The whole thought of prophets and

apostles is concentrated upon this consummation. To such an extent is this the case that they pass lightly and with great silences over the state of the dead between the time of their departure from this world and the Judgment Day. The glorious hope is of the Second Coming, which is a coming to this world and marks the consummation of the kingdom here. *Here* the kingdom is to be established. This planet and the living races on it are to be redeemed. And somehow at the Last Day those who have entered into the rest of the heavenly state are to be brought back to earth, that they may share in the glory of the Saviour's triumph. On every side the question is raised in our age, What is the true motive of Christian missions? Is it the doctrine of eternal punishment? Is it the command of Christ? We fear lest the decision one way or the other of the dispute respecting probation in the other world will "sever the nerve of missions." Yet there might be an end of controversy if we would only understand the teachings of Christ and the apostles on the subject of the kingdom. It is to be established here, on the very soil which sin has defiled. The dark shadow is to be lifted and the planet is to emerge from its moral eclipse. This was the fact that underlay the command of Christ. To bring about this consummation is the task of every Christian, so far as his power and opportunity go. It is the great motive of the Christian church. It is the great motive which animates God and Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Moral philosophy in all ages has busied itself with the quest for the highest good, the *summum bonum*. The Christian finds it in the kingdom of God. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God!" (Matt. vi. 33). This is the "chief end of man," whether Christian or unconverted. This is to be the avowed and followed aim of every follower of Christ. This was pre-eminently the Saviour's own aim while he was on earth. This is what gives the

kingdom its organic unity and brings God and all good beings into one through the Holy Spirit.

And for our assurance in our life of faith and labor for God we have the promise of Jehovah Himself that the great end shall be at last attained. The kingdom shall come in its perfection of glory and beauty. Christ shall be acknowledged as King of kings and Lord of lords. And we, if we are faithful, shall share in the triumph. Our earth, the dear earth we love, shall be once more God's.

I say to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayest meet,
In lane, highway, or open street,

That he, and we, and all men move
Under a canopy of Love,
As broad as the blue sky above :

That doubt and trouble, fear and pain,
And anguish, all are shadows vain ;
That death itself shall not remain :

That weary deserts we may tread,
A dreary labyrinth may thread,
Through dark ways underground be led ;

Yet, if one Guide we will obey,
The dreariest path, the darkest way,
Shall issue out in heavenly day ;

And we, on divers shores now cast,
Shall meet, our perilous voyage past,
All in our Father's home at last.

And ere thou leave him, say thou this :
Yet one word more,—they only miss
The winning of that final bliss

Who will not count it true that Love,
Blessing, not cursing, rules above,
And that in it we live and move.

And one thing further make him know,—
That to believe these things are so,
This firm faith never to forego,

Despite of all which seems at strife,
With blessing, and with curses rife,
That *this* is blessing, *this* is life.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH.

*This chapter is worthy
of careful and special study.*

VIII.

JESUS THE CHRIST

H. A. TAINE, speaking of the difficulties which attend the writing of history, uses the following language: "For the past three hundred years we have been more and more losing sight of things in their full and complete sense; subject to the constraints of a domestic, many-sided and extended education, we fix our attention on the symbols of objects rather than on the objects themselves; instead of on the ground itself, on a map of it; instead of on animals struggling for existence, on nomenclatures and classifications, or at best on stuffed specimens displayed in a museum; instead of on men who feel and act, on statistics, codes, histories, literatures, and philosophies; in short, on printed words, and worse still, on abstract terms difficult to understand, and deceptive, especially in all that relates to human life and society" ("Napoleon Bonaparte," *New Princeton Review*, vol. iii., p. 154).

The same difficulties are encountered by the theologian. He is dealing with facts, not with abstract conceptions, still less with words. He moves in the midst of spiritual realities, whose existence is as certain as that of continent and ocean, mountain, river, and forest. But he is tempted at every step to forget his facts and to take up instead with notions or words. Especially is this true of the great fact of doctrine which now comes before us—Jesus the Christ. We lose ourselves in scholastic discussions respecting Christ's person, or we dwell upon the history of his earthly career until we forget that he is any-

thing but a history. And yet all the while there is the living Christ himself ruling from the throne of the universe, active everywhere in the world by his providence, and dwelling in every Christian heart through his Spirit. He is the fact of facts, by which alone the world and humanity are intelligible. If the Christian revelation is in any true sense the self-manifestation of God which it claims to be, if there is a real kingdom of God, then the presence and redemptive efficiency of Christ mean everything. We might as well study astronomy and forget that there is a sun, or physics and ignore the existence of gravitation and heat and light and electricity, as to study theology and forget the living Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

If, therefore, we take up the doctrine of Christ historically, and discuss those doctrinal formulas by which the church has attempted to express the mystery of his divinely human person, if we speculate concerning the deep Christological problems, let us all the time remember that he himself is here to-day with us, the One who is the first and the last and the Living one, who was dead and is alive forevermore (Rev. i. 18). Greater than our theology, greater than all our doctrines of Christ and our speculations about him is the Christ himself.

“Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day and cease to be ;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

I. The early Christians made confession of their faith in the brief words, JESUS IS THE CHRIST. What did these words mean? To answer the question we must go back to the Old Testament. From the first the redemptive revelation has had a forward look. Attention has often

been called to the fact that while the heathen nations had their Golden Age in the past, the Jew looked for it in the future. Everywhere during the Old Dispensation we discover lines running up in the direction of a higher revelation and converging in a personal center.

One line of approach to the Christ is through the Old Testament mediators, prophets, priests, and kings, who were God's instruments in making His redemptive revelation. In them the divine Spirit dwelt as an endowment of power for the great tasks connected with that revelation. We have seen in a previous chapter that this inspiration was an anticipation of that perfect inspiration which was predicted for the Messiah. Still another line of approach is through the theophanies in the person of the Angel of Jehovah. This mysterious Being, who spoke in the name of Jehovah and to whom divine honors were paid, appears at all the great crises of Old Testament history—at the destruction of the cities of the Plain, at the announcement of Isaac's birth, at the moment when Abraham was about to offer up his son, at Pennel where Jacob wrestled with him, at the burning bush when the divine call was given to Moses (Gen. xxii. 11, 12, 15, xxxi. 11, 13, xxxii. 30, Ex. iii. 2, 4). As the "angel of God's presence" he accompanied the Children of Israel in their journeyings through the wilderness (Ex. xxxiii. 14; Is. lxiii. 9).

Again, everything in the Old Dispensation tends toward a closer and closer union between Jehovah and His people. At first there are occasional glimpses of the divine glory, as when God appeared to Abraham and Moses. Then there is the constant abiding of the Shekinah in the holy of holies of the tabernacle and the temple. Then come the predictions of the "coming of Jehovah." The earth was to see in a sense yet unknown the presence and glory of the Lord. The mighty God Himself was to come, bringing judgment to the wicked

and redemption to His people. He was to set up His kingdom on earth and dwell forever with men (Psalms xcvi. 9; Is. xxxv. 4, xl. 3, 10).

And then, most important of all, because most definitely pointing to the Christ that was to appear, is the prophecy of the Messiah, the anointed King, who was to sit upon the throne of David and establish the kingdom of God. There is a foreshadowing of him in the first vague promise to our fallen parents of the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15). The prediction grows more definite in the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of the seed in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed (Gen. xii. 3, xviii. 18, xxi. 18, xxvi. 4, xxviii. 14). At last, in clear and unmistakable language, the dying Israel foretells the King in whom the royal line of Judah was to culminate (Gen. xlix. 10). The heathen prophet Balaam, moved by the divine Spirit, predicts the coming of the kingdom and its Sovereign (Numb. xxiv. 17 seq.). Then the stream of Messianic prophecy begins to broaden and deepen. The everlasting kingship is promised to the house of David (2 Sam. vii. 12-16, 25).

The great Messianic Psalms describe different phases of the Messiah's person and work, his divine Sonship, his sufferings, his triumph over death, his session at the right hand of God, his glory, his everlasting priesthood, his world-wide dominion (Psalms ii., xlv., lxxii., cx.). As the kingdom of Israel is rent in twain and the two realms thus formed are torn by internal dissensions and threatened by foreign foes, and especially when the Jews have been carried into exile, the coming of the Messiah occupies to a great extent the prophetic thought. He is represented as filled with the divine Spirit. Divine attributes are ascribed to him: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his gov-

ernment and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever" (Is. ix. 6, 7; cf. Mic. v. 2 seq.). The great unknown Prophet of the Exile tells of the suffering and victorious Servant of God, and in language that might almost pass for prediction after the event, so exact is it even in details, the sufferings and death of Christ with the glory which should follow (Is. xl.-lxvi., especially liii.). Daniel in vision beholds the mysterious Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, sees bestowed upon him "an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away" (Dan. vii. 13 seq.; cf. ix. 24-27).

And so when the Christians of apostolic times, many of them fresh from Judaism, and all of them believing that the Old Testament contained a divine revelation, confessed their faith in the words JESUS IS THE CHRIST, they meant that in him all the predictions of the earlier revelation respecting "him that was to come" were fulfilled. They saw in him the perfect Mediator between God and men, of whom the ancient prophets, priests, and kings were imperfect types; he was, like the angel of the Lord, the theophany, the manifestation of the divine presence; in his humanity abode the Shekinah, the indwelling of God, as in a new and holier temple; he was Jehovah come to earth for judgment and redemption; he was the Messianic King, the Ruler of Israel and mankind, the Sovereign in the long-promised and now established kingdom of God. All this and more they ascribed to him who sat upon the throne, and summed it all up in that one word Christ.

II. But let us go back and consider the teachings of the Bible respecting the pre-existent Christ. Who was this Being who fulfilled all prophecy by becoming Jesus Christ?

We shall not expect to find the answer clearly given

while the Saviour was still on earth. When the disciples, after his ascension, came to understand his kingly glory, the Holy Spirit taught them the nature of his pre-existent glory. Before that time the psychological conditions for the understanding of the mystery were not present. It was one of those subjects respecting which Jesus told his disciples just before his death: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all the truth" (John xvi. 12, 13).

Jesus himself said little of his pre-existent state. Yet he did make a few significant utterances upon the subject, which have been preserved by that disciple whose eagle eye afterward saw deepest into the mystery. He speaks of his being sent into the world (John v. 36, viii. 42, x. 36, xviii. 37). He declares that he came down from heaven (John vi. 38). In controversy with the Jews, who denied his knowledge of Abraham, on the ground that he was not yet fifty years old, he gave utterance to the astounding assertion, "Before Abraham was I am!" (John viii. 56-58). In his prayer of high-priestly intercession at the close of the Last Supper he referred in solemn language to the glory which he had had with the Father before the world was (John xvii. 5). All this is little, but it is enough, taken in connection with his assertions of his divinity, to show his claim to have existed in participation of God's eternity.

The two apostles from whom we derive our chief knowledge of the pre-existent Christ are Paul and John. It is interesting to notice that they were the two who had the fullest and truest conception of his exalted glory after his ascension—Paul, the apostle, to whom at his conversion was vouchsafed the vision of the risen Christ in the dazzling light of his divine majesty—John, the disciple, who leaned on the Saviour's breast at the Last Supper, and in the marvellous vision on the isle of Patmos, was taken up

into the heavenly glory and saw the King in his beauty. According to Paul, the Christ before his incarnation was the Son of God, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, the sharer of His essential Deity (Rom. viii. 3, 32; Gal. iv. 4; Col. i. 13 seq.; Phil. ii. 6 seq.). In that magnificent passage in the first chapter of Colossians, in which the relations of the Christ to the whole universe—God, world, angels, and men—are set forth, he is described as “the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation”—image as being the revelation of God, first-born in the sense of superiority to the whole creation; “for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist,” that is, hold together or have their continued existence (Col. i. 15–17). Could his Deity be described in language more impressive! It seems marvellous that anyone who accepts the Bible as true can read those flowing words and then declare the eternal Being, Creator and Preserver of all things, who became incarnate in Jesus the Christ, to be less than God. But there is still another passage, equally magnificent, with a lyric power which shows how nearly allied are poetry and religion, in which Paul traces the career of the Christ from the primitive heavenly glory through the earthly humiliation back to the heavenly glory again (Phil. ii. 6–11). How does he here describe the pre-existent Christ? As “being in the form of God,” that is, as having his essential and eternal existence in the divine, or as being possessed of a divine nature; while equality with God is represented as his right, his personal possession, which he temporarily and freely relinquishes for the purpose of carrying out his mission of redemptive love. In this connection I may mention the language of the epistle to the Hebrews, probably not written by Paul

yet closely related to his teachings. Christ is described before his incarnation as the eternal Son, the Creator of all things, the Being who upholds all things by the word of his power, the effulgence of the divine glory, the very image of God's substance, who reveals God as the light reveals the sun, or the impression the seal that made it (Heb. i. 2, 3).

And then we come to John's teachings. His Gospel begins with the eternal pre-existent state. He who became incarnate is declared to be the eternal Logos or Word, the principle of the divine self-revelation. In the beginning he was with God, and HE WAS GOD (John i. 1). There is no reason to believe that John in this solemn declaration which is the caption of his Gospel means less than he says. The whole Gospel is only a carrying out of this main theme. If John had not used these words the truth would have been implied in his declaration that the exalted Being of whom he tells was the Creator of all things, the Source of all light and life, spiritual, intellectual, physical, in the universe. He was the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father (John i. 1-18). Such was the Being who "became flesh and dwelt among us."

The New Testament gives us reason to believe that long before the incarnation, indeed from the beginnings of human history, the Logos was the active agent of revelation and redemption in the world. He was "the true light, even the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John i. 9; for the rendering of the verse see Meyer's "John," and Dwight in Godet's "John," Am. ed., *in loc.*). The deepest insight into New Testament truth tends to confirm the teaching of the Fathers respecting the "Logos Spermatikos," the divine Word in the soul of every man, who leads even the heathen to the truth. It was the "Spirit of Christ" that spoke through the prophets of the Old Dispensation (1 Pet. i. 11; cf. iii.

18-20, according to a widely accepted interpretation). Paul says that the "spiritual rock" which followed the Israelites in the wilderness was Christ (1 Cor. x. 4, 5). We cannot doubt, if we accept the New Testament doctrine in its general principles, that the divine Logos was present in every revelation of God during the Old Dispensation. For this reason the New Testament writers, and even Jesus himself, apply without hesitation to the Messiah Old Testament language of which the original reference is to Jehovah (Matt. xi. 10; Heb. i. 8-12 compared with Psalm xlv. 6, 7, and cii. 25-27; Rom. x. 13 with Joel ii. 32; 1 Cor. ii. 16 with Isaiah xl. 13; 1 Cor. x. 22 with Deut. xxxii. 21).

Summing up these Scriptural data, we may say that he who became incarnate in Jesus the Christ was truly God, distinguished from the Father as the Son, the Word, the Image, the Effulgence, of God, second in the Godhead yet not less than God. Whoever will call this truth in question must seek his arguments outside of the Bible. The pre-existent Christ was God.

III. We are now to examine the Scriptural doctrine of the Christ on earth. Our chief difficulty will arise from the richness of the material. Yet I shall hope to make the main points clear.

The first fact which meets us is the incarnation. "The Word became flesh" (John i. 14). He "who being in the form of God, counted not equality with God a prize to be violently retained, emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 6-8). Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich (2 Cor. viii. 9). The object of the incarnation was redemption. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life" (John iii. 16, 17).

The New Testament writers, true to the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, teach us that the Saviour was a true man. From his birth he was subject to the law of human growth and development; he "advanced in wisdom and stature" (Luke ii. 40, 52). In outward appearance he resembled other men (John iv. 9, xx. 15). He manifested the ordinary human wants, the need of sleep, hunger and thirst (Matt. viii. 24; John iv. 6, xix. 28). All human sensibilities stirred in his soul and revealed themselves in his looks and acts—joy, love, sympathy, distress, agitation, sorrow even to tears, anger (John xi. 5; Mark x. 21; Matt. ix. 36, xxvi. 38; John xiii. 21; Mark iii. 5). He possessed a human soul and spirit. His knowledge and his power were limited. He could be tempted. Like other men he prayed to God (John xii. 27; Luke xxiii. 46; Mark xiii. 32; Matt. iv. 1-11; Heb. ii. 17, 18; Mark i. 35; John xvii. 1; Luke xi. 1). He, in this also like other men, left this world by the gate of death.

At the same time, while Jesus was true man, he was a unique man, in many important respects different from all other men. His birth was a stupendous miracle, for he was "conceived by the Holy Ghost" and with no human father "born of the Virgin Mary" (Matt. i. 18-25; Luke i. 26 seq.). All the important junctures of his life were signalized by angelic visitations—his birth, his temptation, the agony in the Garden, the resurrection, the ascension (Luke i. 26 seq., ii. 9 seq.; Matt. iv. xi.; Luke xxii. 43; Matt. xxviii. 2). Mention has been made, in the chapter on "Inspiration," of the Saviour's endowment with the Holy Spirit at the baptism—an inspiration which went far beyond that of the greatest prophets, and which we must understand rather as giving egress to the divine power proper to his nature than as enduing him with an extraneous capability. Thus inspired, he spake as never man spake and performed his miracles. Nor shall we in

this connection fail to notice the uniqueness of Christ's death and the marvel of his resurrection.

The unique manhood of Jesus appears most strikingly in his moral perfection. He was that "moral miracle," a perfect man. We are too apt to speak of the Saviour's holy character and life in negative terms, calling him the sinless man. But in him there was something more than sinlessness, even supreme moral perfection, an outflowing perfection which has given mankind a new ideal. He alone of all the descendants of Adam seems to have been from the first without inherited taint or tendency to sin. Even before his birth the herald angel called him "that holy thing" (Luke i. 35). The temptations to which he was subjected after his baptism and at later periods in his life were undoubtedly real; "he suffered being tempted" (Heb. ii. 18). But Satan found nothing in him and retired from the assault baffled and defeated (Matt. iv. 1-18; John xiv. 30). We have his own assertions, implied and direct, that he was sinless (Matt. vii. 11; Luke xi. 13, xiii. 3; John viii. 46, x. 36). And what is even more significant, his life and words, as they are recorded by the Evangelists, bear out his testimony. We search in vain for a flaw in that spotless life. With one voice and in explicit language his disciples declare that he knew no sin (Acts iii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 19, ii. 22, iii. 18; Rom. viii. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. iv. 15; 1 John ii. 29, iii. 7). And what a picture do they all give us, drawn with reverent hand out of their loving remembrance of his personality and life, of his love, his self-sacrifice, his devotion to the truth, his entire obedience to the divine will.

Let me mention still another feature in his unique manhood. He was the central and universal man, the typical man, in whom all the excellencies of the race are comprehended and who stands in a direct relation to every man in the race. The title by which he most frequently designated himself was "the Son of Man." It was a Mes-

sianic name, taken from the prophecy of Daniel (vii. 13 seq.), where the Messiah is described under this title as coming in the clouds of heaven to take possession of his kingdom. But Christ so used it as to show that he intended by it to express his peculiar relation to mankind (Matt. viii. 20, ix. 6; Mark ix. 9; Luke ix. 22; John v. 27). Paul took up the conception and developed it in his doctrine of the Second Adam, the new spiritual Head of the race, who has come to redeem men from the consequences of the first Adam's sin (Rom. v. 12 seq.; 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45 seq.). The author of the epistle to the Hebrews dwells upon the universal brotherhood of the Christ, which is the ground of his high-priestly office (Heb. ii. 17, 18, iv. 14, 15, v. 7-10).

Nor is this period without its evidence of the Deity of the incarnate One. Christ himself did not often refer to it. He would not have been understood had he done so. But he never denies it, always implies it, and sometimes even asserts it. His life itself bore on it the marks of divinity. As when the sun shines from behind heavy clouds, only now and then glimpses and flashes revealed the presence of the God in him, but when they gleamed forth there was no mistaking them. His sinlessness in a world of sin receives its best explanation if we suppose him to have been divine as well as human. His whole tone and bearing raised him above the level of humanity. He claimed to be greater than the greatest prophets of the Old Dispensation (Matt. xii. 41 seq., xxii. 41-45). They were merely instruments of a higher power, receiving their authority from above. He acted in his own authority, at once God's agent and His equal. Thus he set his authority above that of Moses, "It hath been said, An eye for an eye. . . . But *I* say unto you, That ye resist not evil!" (Matt. v. 38, 39). Mark that "imperial I." which no mere man could honestly have used. In like manner his miracles were performed in his own name,

"I will; be thou clean!" (Matt. viii. 3). And as he claimed to be greater than the greatest prophets, so he claimed to be greater than the temple, in whose holy of holies dwelt the divine Shekinah (Matt. xii. 6). He called himself the Way of entrance to the kingdom of God, the Door, the Good Shepherd (John x. 7, 11, xiv. 6). He summoned men to personal faith in himself (Matt. xi. 28-30; John iii. 16). He claimed authority to forgive sins (Matt. ix. 2; Luke v. 20). He offered himself to the world as the source of spiritual life and the supply of all spiritual needs (John v. 26, vi. 48, vii. 37). He made loyalty to him superior to the claims of kindred and friendship (Matt. viii. 22, x. 37). He declared that he was the Judge of mankind, both now and at the Last Day, and that the criterion of judgment was the personal relation of men to him (Matt. xxv. 34-46; John v. 22, 27). As the Lord of life, he is to call men forth from their graves at the resurrection, as he called back the dead Lazarus to life (John vi. 39, xi. 25).

In these things the divinity of the Christ is implied. But he made more direct claims. The term Son, as Christ uses it when speaking of his Father in heaven, in many instances undoubtedly implies unity of essence with God. In the discourses recorded in the first three Gospels this is probable; in those which John has preserved it is certain (Matt. xi. 27, xvi. 29; Mark xiii. 32; John iii. 16, and often). It is a most significant fact that Christ, in speaking to his disciples of God, never calls Him "our Father;" in one instance he is at pains to distinguish his own relation to God from that of his disciples in language which utterly precludes misunderstanding: "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God" (John xx. 17). The apostle John has preserved for us some of the most striking utterances of Christ respecting his divine nature. He identifies himself with God in such a way in the work of redemption

that even his dependence becomes an evidence of a common nature (John v. 19, 30). He declares that to see him is tantamount to seeing the Father (John xiv. 9). The same honor is due to him as to the Father (John v. 23). When he says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v. 17), he co-ordinates his work with that of the Father in a way no mere man could. As we have seen in another connection, he declared his divine pre-existence, and in such language as to imply that he was still the same divine personality, "Before Abraham was *I* am!" (John viii. 58). Finally, he makes the explicit assertion, "I and my Father are one!" (John x. 30). And in using this passage I do not deny that he means to say primarily, "I and my Father are one in our efficiency, one in our power;" but my contention is that this unity of power can only be explained upon the ground of unity of essence, and that Jesus so understood it (see Dwight, in Godet's "John," Am. ed., vol. ii., p. 485). It is true that Christ said to his disciples just before his death, "My Father is greater than I" (John xiv. 28), but the apparent contradiction disappears when we see that he is contrasting his state of humiliation, which then had reached its nadir, with the heavenly glory soon to be his when all the Father's power would be in his hands. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I." We may even find with Horace Bushnell in these words one of the most convincing proofs of Christ's divinity; "How preposterous for any mere human being of our race to be gravely telling the world that God is greater than he is!" ("God in Christ," p. 125). The Jews better understood what Christ meant and took up stones to stone him, in accordance with the Mosaic punishment of blasphemy: "For a good work we stone thee not," they said; "but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John x. 33; cf. v. 18, vi. 42, viii. 52 seq.).

At the last he was tried and executed upon this very charge of blasphemy (Mark xiv. 61-64; John xix. 7). His accusers knew, and he did not deny, that being a man he made himself God. That was the mystery of his incarnation and his work. To those who had no spiritual understanding of his teachings, and would not open their hearts to his influence, no wonder this was a stumbling block. And yet here and there was one to whom a glimpse of the truth came as the explanation of everything. The heathen centurion who superintended his crucifixion was moved to exclaim, "Truly this man was a Son of God!" The doubting Thomas, after his resurrection, cried, unrebuked by the Master, "My Lord and my God!"

I shall refer under the next head of our discussion to what the apostles have to testify respecting the deity of Christ. Their thoughts are chiefly on the risen Saviour, and they feel no need of entering into the question of his divinity when on earth, but they always take it for granted. They never think of explaining his later glory as an apotheosis, such as the heathen claimed for their heroes, the assumption of a man into the deity and his enduement with divine attributes and honors. Incarnation and apotheosis are two entirely different conceptions, and the former was the doctrine of the apostles. "We beheld," says John, "his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," and, "The life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness" (John i. 14.; 1 John i. 2).

It is to be borne in mind that this was the time of the Saviour's humiliation. He had come to earth to perform that great work by which the kingdom was to be established as a kingdom of redemption, and he was to be prepared for his Messianic kingship. It was not until his resurrection that he was "declared to be Son of God with power" (Rom. i. 4). Paul tells us that, in taking upon

him the "form of a servant," "he emptied himself" of his divine glory and of the exercise of his divine attributes (Phil. ii. 7). He not only subjected himself to the necessary limitations of humanity, but to the limitations of one who in a sinful world was "made like unto his brethren," and "was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. ii. 17, iv. 15). In the prosecution of his work of salvation he passed through the successive stages of infancy, childhood, youth, and manhood, subjecting himself to the physical, intellectual, and spiritual restrictions of each period. Even during his active ministry, when the glory of the divine was only partially concealed by the veil of flesh, his omnipotence and omniscience were both subordinated to the limitations of his humanity and his redemptive work. As part of his mediatorial vocation, he shared in human pain and misery, and endured sorrows peculiarly his own. "The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering" (Heb. ii. 10). And then he endured the cruel death of the cross. How this could be, how he could be divine and yet endure all these human sufferings of his humiliation the sacred writers do not attempt to explain. They give us merely the facts.

IV. We come now to the teachings of the New Testament respecting the ascended Christ. With the resurrection and the ascension everything is changed. This is the true coronation of the Messiah. The promised throne of David is the throne of God, and now the Son of David for the first time sits upon it. While on earth, he was the heir in the far country among the wicked husbandmen, who plotted to kill him that the vineyard might be theirs (Mark xii. 1-12). Now he had found the way of the cross the way of light, and had entered into the possession of his kingly glory. While he was still on earth there were a few who believed that he was the Messiah, but it was only by way of anticipation. The apostles be-

held his glory upon the Mount of Transfiguration, but it was only as a prophecy of that which was to come after his resurrection. His ascension was necessary not only that his disciples might understand that he was the King, but also that the ground for the understanding might be supplied. They could not know that he was the Christ in all the significance of the Messianic office, because he was not actually installed as the Christ. The proof did not come till the day of Pentecost. Then the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the power given to the disciples to preach the Gospel and perform miracles, gave the undeniable evidence that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, and that he was sitting upon the throne. On that day the disciples were able for the first time to say, in the words of Peter, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36).

Some of the disciples had actual glimpses of the King. The first martyr, confronting the unbelieving Jews, whom he was vainly endeavoring to convince that Jesus was the Messiah, "full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God," and died with the cry, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts vii. 55-60). He manifested himself in all his glory to the persecutor Paul, while on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus, and he was won to the faith in Jesus the Messiah. From this time forward there is no doubt in the minds of the disciples as to who and what Christ is. He had declared just before his ascension, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18), and they knew by what they saw going on about them, and what they experienced in their own inner lives, that this was indeed true. They called the glorified Jesus the Christ, taking the title with which prophecy had made them familiar. Or else they called him Lord, employing the Greek word

Kurios, the Septuagint translation of *Adonai*, the term used in the reading of the Old Testament as a substitute for the sacred and unutterable name Jehovah. It is interesting to note that they applied it indiscriminately to God and Christ, with no sense of inconsistency in calling the two by the same title, so that it is often difficult to tell whether the Father or the Son is meant—much as to-day in our common religious speech we designate either Father or Son as Lord (James v. 8, 10, 11). According to the apostolic conception Christ is at the “right hand of God,” that is, he shares in the divine glory and government. He is the Son, in a sense which implies participation in the divine essence (Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iv. 4). The apostles associate him with the Father, on equal terms, in their benedictions as the author of spiritual blessings, or with the Father and Holy Spirit (Rom. i. 7, xvi. 20, 24; 1 Cor. i. 3, xvi. 23; 2 Cor. i. 2, xiii. 14; Gal. i. 3, vi. 18; Eph. i. 2, vi. 23, 24). They represent him as the final Judge of all (1 Cor. iv. 5; 2 Cor. v. 10; 2 Thess. i. 6–10; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 8). Divine attributes are ascribed to him (Rev. i. 18, xxii. 13). He is an object of worship to the disciples (Acts vii. 59, 60; 1 Cor. i. 2; Phil. ii. 9, 10; 2 Tim. iv. 22; Heb. i. 6; Rev. i. 5, 6, v. 11, 12). And then they call him God. It is true that the passages in which he is so designated are all disputed by those whose doctrinal system compels them to deny the Deity of Christ, but the best modern exegesis, with a distinctness that only grows more emphatic as New Testament scholarship advances, defends the evangelical interpretation. Thus Paul in the epistle to the Romans (ix. 5) speaks of the Israelites, “whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever;” and in the epistle to Titus (ii. 13) he calls the Redeemer “our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (see Dwight, in “Meyer’s Commentary,” Am. ed., on both these passages). Nor is it a matter of surprise that John,

who in the Prologue of his Gospel called the pre-existent Logos God, in his First Epistle says of him, "This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John v. 20).

The apostles lay the chief emphasis, in their references to the ascended Christ, upon his divinity. But they do not ignore his humanity. As he ascended into heaven, the angel declared, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11). In his exalted glory he is still the *man* Christ Jesus, the Mediator between God and men (1 Tim. ii. 5). He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever" (Heb. xiii. 8). The epistle to the Hebrews shows how, as the divinely human, he who was tempted on earth can still be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (iv. 15). John saw him in the visions of the Revelation still bearing the traces of his earthly life, the Lamb that had been slain, the One that liveth and was dead (Rev. i. 18; v. 6). There upon the throne of the divine majesty he sits, at once divine and human, and in him humanity is exalted to the divine glory. Thus he waits until redemption shall be complete and his enemies vanquished, then to return to earth in glory. He shall judge the earth, and at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 10, 11).

V. Such are the facts from which the Christian church has derived its doctrine of Christ. Christ was the eternal Son of God. To carry out his redemptive work he became man, yet in such a way as to remain God. In one unique personality God and man were united. He is still the God-man, not now in the state of humiliation, but exalted as the King in the divine kingdom. These simple Christian truths shine in their own light. But the church had a long struggle to maintain them, and four centuries

passed before it succeeded in so formulating its doctrine as to be able to defend it against all assaults. To this doctrine and the steps by which it was attained we must now for a little while give our attention.

✓ The apostolic age was not over before heretics began to pervert the scripture teachings concerning Christ. The *Docetists* denied the true humanity of the Saviour. They held that he assumed not a real body but only the appearance of one, and thus they sought to bring the doctrine into accordance with their belief in the inherent evil of matter. Perhaps the apostle John has reference to this sect in his epistle when he asserts so emphatically the coming of Jesus in the flesh (1 John iv. 2, 3; 2 John 7). The *Ebionites* went to the other extreme, denying the true divinity of Christ. They made him a mere man, the son of Joseph instead of the Son of God. Next come the *Arians*, the rationalists of the early church. They could not deny the pre-existence of Christ yet were unable to admit his Deity. According to their view he was the highest of all created beings, made before time began, and constituted God's agent in creation. He was not of the same essence with the father but of a different essence. This superhuman and superangelic, yet not divine, being became incarnate in Jesus. The *Semi-Arians*, who sought to steer a middle course between the Arians and the Orthodox Christians, maintained the view of Origen, admitting the eternity and divinity of the Logos, but denying that he was God in the highest sense of the term. According to their doctrine he owes his existence to the will of the Father. He is not of the same essence with the Father, but of a similar essence (not *homoousios* but *homoiousios*).

The first of the great ecumenical Councils of the Christian church was held at Nice, under the auspices of the Christian Emperor Constantine, in the year 325 A.D. The Arian and the Semi-Arian doctrines were both repudiated

and the Deity of Christ asserted in the fullest and most explicit terms. The creed adopted by that Council, and reaffirmed in the following words, says of Christ :

I believe "in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father ; by whom all things were made ; who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man ; he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate ; he suffered and was buried ; and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures ; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father ; from thence he cometh again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead ; whose kingdom shall have no end."

Thus both the Deity and humanity of Christ were recognized in the doctrine of the church. But the questions relating to the personal union of the two were left unsettled. Hence a series of new controversies, occupying more than a century longer. The *Apollinarians* taught that in the incarnation the Logos became the spirit of the Christ, so that his humanity consisted only of the body and the soul which man possesses in common with the animal, but lacked the reason, which is the distinctive characteristic of mankind. The *Nestorians*, while admitting that Christ was truly divine and truly human, yet separated the two natures to such an extent as practically to sever the personal union and leave a mere ethical union between them. The *Monophysites* went to the opposite extreme, teaching that Christ after his incarnation had but one nature, a nature at once divine and human.

The fourth ecumenical Council, held at Chalcedon, A.D.

451, gave final shape to the doctrine of Christ's person. It declared that :

“ Jesus Christ is perfect in his Godhead, and the same is perfect in his manhood ; he is truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body ; he is consubstantial with the Father as to his Deity, and the same is consubstantial with us as to his humanity, and like us in all respects, sin excepted. He was begotten of the Father before the ages as to his Deity ; but in these last days he for us and for our salvation was born of the Virgin Mary, the mother of God, as to his humanity. He is one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, existing in two natures without mixture, without change, without division, without separation ; the diversity of the two natures not being at all destroyed by their union in the one person, but rather the peculiar property of each nature being preserved and concurring in one person and one subsistence.”

The same great truths are expressed in the simple language of the “ Westminster Catechism : ” “ The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures and one person forever.”

From the days of the great controversies which received their final settlement at the Council of Chalcedon, there has been substantial agreement in the Christian church respecting the person of Christ. The few who have dissented from the Orthodox doctrine have been an insignificant fraction of the body of Christians. The Unitarian movements of our own time in Great Britain and America, though they have attracted attention on account of the high character of their leaders and the philanthropic aims which they have cherished, have occasioned no appreciable division in the Christian church. The vast majority of Christ's followers accept the Orthodox doc-

trine. They accept it not because it is Orthodox, but because they believe it to be biblical and true.

More than any other doctrine of the Christian system this expresses the unity of the church. The scattered churches of Christendom are one in their confession respecting the Christ. The swarthy Abyssinians, the members of the Oriental communions, the Greeks, the Roman Catholics, the many Protestant denominations, agree in the acceptance of this central truth of the Christian faith. Great though their differences are in other respects, here they are united. Jesus the Christ is their divine and human Lord. Let us, therefore, hold fast to this precious truth by holding fast to the divine Christ himself, who ever lives and rules, our Saviour and our King.

IX.

CHRISTOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

It is my purpose in the present chapter to discuss several of the more difficult problems connected with the doctrine of Christ's person, and to give some account of the theories by which the theologians have attempted to solve them. The region of speculative theology which we shall thus enter may seem to those who are not familiar with it barren and uninviting. Certainly on its lofty uplands the atmosphere is attenuated and cold, and there is little to satisfy either the intellect or the heart. Nevertheless, theological speculation is not without its value. The brave and honest attempt to solve an insoluble problem brings its reward. Although from the nature of the case it must fail in its main object, it discovers aspects of truth which would otherwise be overlooked. It stimulates the mind to deep and fruitful thought upon the great subjects with which it deals. And best of all, it teaches us the boundaries between the known and the unknown, the knowable and the unknowable. It is a great thing in theology, as indeed in all sciences, to know our ignorance. But there are two kinds of ignorance. One is the superficial and unthinking kind which hinders all true theologizing. The other is that *docta ignorantia*, that learned ignorance, which is the result of much study and thought, and which confesses its limitations because it has learned just where they lie and just what they are. It is the latter which we need in theology. In a science so high, where the Infinite and His relations to the finite are the objects

of investigation, every fact is but an island of knowledge encompassed by a sea of mystery. It is the man who has followed speculative theology in all its lofty flights and has thus learned both its strength and its weakness, who comes back with the spirit of a little child to the confession of Paul, "We know in part." "As for perfection or completeness in divinity," says Lord Bacon, with a wisdom far in advance of his age, "it is not to be sought. For he that will reduce a knowledge into an art, will make it round and uniform; but in divinity many things must be left abrupt and concluded with this: *O altitudo divitiarum sapientiæ et scientiæ Dei! quam incomprehensibilia sunt judicia ejus, et investigabiles viæ ejus!*" (O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Rom. xi. 33).

I. The first of the problems before us concerns the Reason for the incarnation. Would the Word have become flesh had it not been for sin and the consequent need of redemption? The traditional answer to this question is in the negative. The great majority of thinkers in the Christian church have agreed with Anselm, who in his "*Cur Deus Homo?*"—Why did God become Man?—made the redemptive work the ground of the incarnation. Had Adam stood his probation successfully, it is said, God would have brought the race forward to its goal by another and shorter way. It was to correct the havoc which sin has made in God's fair creation that the eternal Son of God became man.

On the other hand, it is held that the incarnation would have taken place had there been no sin. There are traces of this view in the writings of the great church father Irenæus. It was maintained by Rupert of Deutz in the Middle Ages. It has been revived and presented with great force and plausibility by some of the most distinguished speculative theologians of recent times in Ger-

many, notably by Martensen and Dorner. They teach that since the race was created for the God-man, it needs him for its perfection as well as for its redemption. He is the Head of mankind; without him the race would be incomplete. Had Adam remained holy, Christ must still have needs come, to sum up all things in himself, the things in heaven and the things upon the earth (Eph. i. 10). This view is commonly held in connection with a larger scheme of doctrine. God's relation to the world has been from the first one of self-communication and self-revelation or self-expression. Creation is the beginning of the process of which the incarnation marks the culmination, and the final establishment of the kingdom the completion. God communicates His perfections first to the material world and makes it a true though imperfect expression of His nature. Then in man, created in His own image, he finds a truer and higher medium and object. The individual and the race each body forth in their own way the perfections of the divine, and God finds in them a temple for His indwelling. But still the self-communication and self-revelation are imperfect and relative. Only broken and scattered rays of the divine light are manifested. The indwelling of God is, so to speak, external and partial. But in the incarnate Son, Jesus the Christ, God finds the perfect embodiment of His perfections, the true and adequate image of the divine. In him the self-communication and self-revelation are not relatively but absolutely realized. There is no separation and scattering of the rays from the divine light, but they are concentrated as in a focus, so that he is the "Light of the world." God dwells in him, not externally, not as a different Being coming from without, but through the Logos as the perfect indwelling of the Deity, in the holy of holies of the perfect temple. He possesses the Spirit without measure. Christ now becomes the Perfecter of the race. He gathers a holy manhood about him, to

whom he imparts his Spirit, bringing them into likeness with himself and uniting them with God. No man attains the end of his creation except through Christ. Apart from him he remains in his spiritual nonage. And equally the race needs him for its completion. Through the Christ the indwelling of God in mankind is consummated, and the church, which is the body of Christ, is His everlasting temple. Of course, if this scheme of doctrine be true, it follows that the incarnation is essential to the evolution of humanity apart from the fact of sin.

Now the beauty of this speculation is not to be denied, nor the new aspects of truth which it brings to light. Nevertheless, there is little in the Scriptures to sustain it. The redemptive revelation, through which alone we have any knowledge of the incarnation and the God-man, bases itself entirely upon the fact of sin. And the existence of sin and the need of redemption are the only reasons given for the coming of Christ. It was redemptive love that led the Father to send His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life" (John iii. 16). Christ says himself that he came to save the world (John xii. 47). His mission was to seek and save that which was lost (Luke xix. 10). "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses" (2 Cor. v. 19). The very passage upon which those who teach an incarnation apart from sin principally rely, seems to make redemption through Christ's blood an essential part of his coming (Eph. i. 7). So far the presumption of the New Testament seems to favor the traditional view. The other theory may be true, but certainly it does not seem to be scriptural.

And yet, have we reached the bottom of the matter? Are not both views, so far as they attempt to answer the question what would have been, had there been no sin, speculations? What right does the Bible give us to sup-

pose that God ever meant that this world should be without sin? Do not misunderstand me. I am not teaching the so-called supralapsarian doctrine that God efficiently caused sin, that so He might manifest His glory in the salvation of the elect and the perdition of the non-elect. Undoubtedly Adam and his successors have freely sinned. But did not God from the first know all this? Did He not determine in His eternal plan to permit the sin which would be freely committed? And did He not construct the world and create man upon the assumption of sin? Was not redemption, which implies sin, a part of the original decree? Was it not woven into the very fabric of this earth and its human race? Sin was no surprise to God, which redemption came in afterward to correct. Christ was from the first intended to be the sinner's Saviour, and the redeemed were "chosen in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4). To understand what God would have done, had there been no sin, we should have to go back into the counsels of eternity and know all the infinite possibilities of God. Sin does exist, and Christ has come that he might redeem us from it, and he is to the sinful world, and every soul in it who accepts his grace, both Redeemer and Perfecter. But beyond this we cannot go. We pass out of the realm of knowledge into that of mystery.

II. Another problem relates to the possibility of the incarnation. In the person of Christ the infinite and the finite are united. The mighty God has become man. We ask, like Nicodemus, when Jesus told him of the new birth, "How can these things be?" Is not this conception of the God-man self-contradictory? Are not Deity and humanity incommensurate forms of existence? Are we not dealing with words rather than with facts, when we talk of a union of the divine and the human in a single personality?

Theology has not left these questions wholly unan-

swered. It has done its best to solve the problem before us. It shows, in the first place, that the theistic conception of God—which is the Christian conception—lays the basis for the doctrine of the incarnation in its view of the relation of God to His creatures. The deistical notion of God, which separates Him from the completed creation, confining His agency to sitting apart, as Carlyle says, and guiding it, and seeing it go, leaves no place for an incarnation. But Christianity accepts no such meagre doctrine of God's providence. Rather it regards God as immanent in all the activities of the material world and of man. His presence and power are everywhere. (Second causes are permeated with the First Cause.) Instead of the finite being separated from the Infinite, it is everywhere full of the Infinite. The finite is the appointed means for the revelation of the Infinite. There is a true sense in which God has His abode in every atom, and manifests His power in every transformation of energy. Christian theism finds an element of truth in pantheism as well as in deism. It avoids the errors of both. It holds to both the immanence and the transcendence of God. But its doctrine of the divine immanence removes some of the most forcible objections to the incarnation. If the Infinite dwells in every grass-blade, there is no self-contradiction in the idea of His indwelling in the Christ.

Again, man was made in an especial sense for the divine indwelling. He was created in the divine image. He attains his true ideal only when his soul becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost. However much of mystery there may be about it, every Christian realizes in his own experience this inward presence and abiding of God. If the mighty God can enter the soul of ordinary men and make his abode there, if this was the purpose for which men were created, then is it altogether strange that He should find in a higher and fuller sense His abode in the perfect humanity of the Christ?

So much for the hints in explanation of the incarnation which are suggested by the nature of the creature. There are others which come to us when we consider the character of God. The Christian revelation has given us a conception of God that is wholly new. There are indeed faint intimations in nature and the ethnic religions that God is love. But only Christianity makes known the full meaning of the truth. The essence of love is self-bestowal, the giving of self for the good of others. It finds its highest exercise in the sacrifice of self. It is greatest when it stoops the lowest. This is the side of God's character which redemption reveals to us. His glory is in His condescension. He does not demean Himself when He takes upon Him the sins and sorrows of men; rather He manifests His greatness. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit" (Isaiah lvii. 15). Now it is in accordance with the character of God, as thus revealed, that He should condescend to take up His permanent abode in humanity through the incarnation, and especially that He should do it for the sake of redeeming a lost race. God could not have done a thing more Godlike than this.

But while these considerations go far to meet the difficulties which arise respecting the possibility of the incarnation, I am far from asserting that they explain the transcendent fact itself. It is and must ever remain a mystery. It is unlike every other fact in the whole range of existence. The more deeply we ponder it, the greater become the length and breadth and depth and height of its incomprehensibility.

III. Still another problem is that of the Kenosis or self-emptying of the divine Word. Paul tells us that the eternal Son, who was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, "emptied himself,

taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 6, 7). John tells us that "the Word *became* flesh" (John i. 14). Now how much do these expressions mean? We know that Jesus Christ was born an infant, increased in wisdom and stature, passed through childhood and youth to manhood, lived for thirty years the life of an ordinary man, in pursuance of his redemptive ministry went about for three years or more doing good, suffered, died, rose from the dead—all before he ascended to his heavenly glory and sat down upon the throne of God. We know that during all this time he was subject to human limitations, hungered, thirsted, slept, experienced human weakness in body and mind. We know that in some things he was ignorant (Mark xiii. 32), and that, while the divine power was at his disposal, he exercised it only in the performance of his miracles, which were few when we consider the extent of his activity. Are we, then, to understand that when the Logos became flesh he emptied himself of the divine attributes? Did the divine nature conform itself to the limits of the human nature? Or did the divine nature remain, in all its integrity, in full possession of the divine attributes? Was Christ, as to his Deity, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, while in his humanity he was ignorant, weak, and confined to a single place?

The traditional theology accepts the latter alternative. It believes it necessary if we are to maintain both natures in their integrity. While the babe Jesus lay slumbering in the manger at Bethlehem, the eternal Son was in the full exercise of his divine attributes, manifesting the divine glory in Heaven, upholding the whole creation by the word of his power, governing all things by his providence, present in the utmost corner of the universe. When the human Jesus was suffering his agony in the Garden and dying on the cross, his divine nature was in the full enjoyment of the heavenly blessedness. Only

through his connection with the humanity of Christ could the divine Son be said to have been tempted. Merely the human in Christ sorrowed and suffered, for God is ever supremely happy and incapable of suffering. The advocates of this theory have always asserted that the God-man was but one person. Yet they have generally held that there were two consciousnesses in him, the one divine and the other human.

On the other hand, many modern theologians have attempted to explain the mystery by a very different line of speculation. They are especially concerned to maintain the unity of Christ's person, even at the expense of the integrity of his two natures. Prominent among these theologians are Gess, Thomasius, and Godet. They find their starting-point in the Lutheran Christology. Luther, in order to maintain his doctrine of the actual presence of Christ's body in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, taught that in the glorified Christ the attributes of the divine nature are communicated to the humanity, so that the latter is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. The theologians of whom I am speaking apply the same theory to Christ in the state of humiliation, only transposing the relation. They hold that while Christ was on earth the attributes of the human nature were communicated to his Deity. We have seen that Paul calls the act by which the Logos became incarnate, an emptying of himself, a *Kenosis*; if we employ the Greek word (Phil. ii. 7). What was this *Kenosis*? was it a mere renunciation of the divine glory, or was it something more? The answer of these theologians—who are called, by way of eminence, *Kenotists*, and whose theory is similarly designated the *Kenosis* theory—is that the Logos emptied himself of the divine attributes, some say of all the divine attributes, others, only of those which belong to God's relation to the world. By a process of self-limitation the divine Son reduced himself, as it were, to the dimensions

of humanity. He relinquished his omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. He divested himself of his eternal self-consciousness. In a word, he retained only the bare divine essence.

The theory finds a typical form in the Kenosis doctrine of Gess. He holds that, in the incarnation, the Son not only assumed a human nature, but actually *became* a human soul in a human body. The act and process of self-limitation by which the incarnation was effected may be illustrated by the phenomena of sleep in ordinary human experience. What is it to go to sleep? It is to relinquish for a time the attributes of our spiritual being, to renounce our self-consciousness, and to pass into a state of unconsciousness. The soul is present in sleep, but it is present as bare essence; its attributes are quiescent. Gess calls attention to the fact that we generally enter into the state of sleep by an act of free choice and volition; we will to sleep, that is, we will to reduce our souls to a state of unconsciousness and passivity. Not dissimilar was the experience of the Son when he became man. By an act of free self-determination he divested himself of his divine self-consciousness and his divine attributes and became the infant Jesus. There was but one self-consciousness in the babe on Mary's knee, namely, that which belonged to it as a human being just entering upon life, and enswathed in this self-consciousness, lying dormant there, reduced to these human and infantile dimensions, was the eternal self-consciousness of the divine Son, which he had thus freely relinquished for the purposes of redemption. As the child increases in wisdom and stature the divine nature is proportionately rehabilitated. With the growth of the human self-consciousness the divine self-consciousness reappears. The boy Jesus in the Temple already calls God his Father in a higher sense than other men, and is stirred with presentiments of his great work. The baptism brings him into the full consciousness of who and

what he is, and of his redemptive mission. The complete rehabilitation of the divine attributes and functions comes with the ascension to God's right hand, which ends the period of humiliation and begins the state of exaltation and glory. Now he is God not only in essence but in the possession and exercise of all the divine qualities.

— Another speculation, designed to occupy middle ground between the traditional view and the Kenosis theories, is that of the great German theologian Dorner. It is commonly called the theory of Progressive Incarnation, a designation which, however, is not wholly satisfactory. Dorner holds with the advocates of the traditional doctrine that during the whole of Christ's earthly life the Logos remained in the full possession of the divine attributes and self-consciousness. He differs from them, however, in his view of the theanthropic or divinely human person of Christ. The common view has been that the person of the Logos became the person of the God-man, so that the humanity, apart from its union with the divine nature, is impersonal. Dorner maintains that the theanthropic person is the result of the union of the two natures. The "I" of the Christ is not the "I" of the eternal Logos, but a new "I," a new center of self-consciousness and self-determination, which has been constituted through the uniting of the divine with the human. Accordingly, the humanity of Christ is no more impersonal than the divinity; the two find their common meeting-point in the one personality of the God-man. Now at the incarnation the Logos united himself truly to the human nature, so that it could be said that "the Logos was from the beginning united with Jesus in the deepest ground of his being, and the life of Jesus was always a theanthropic life" (Dorner, "Glaubenslehre," § 104, vol. ii., p. 431). This union, however, was at first relatively external and incomplete. The newly established personality partook of the human limitations of the child Jesus. But as in the process of growth

the theanthropic personality was developed, the Logos communicated himself more and more fully to the human nature of Christ and the union between them became more and more complete. This gradual welding of the two natures into closer union may be illustrated by the relations of the soul and body in the ordinary human being. In infancy soul and body are truly united, but not completely united. The whole process of growth and education is a progressive blending of soul and body. The body is brought under the mastery of the soul, so that it becomes its perfect instrument in all its activities. The soul comes to interpenetrate the whole body. It is not in a mere figure of speech that we say of the musician that his soul was in his fingers. In Lowell's poem, when the student goes into his library and takes the volumes from the shelves, the way in which he touches the leaves tells the story of his soul's love for them :

“ ‘ We know the practised finger,’
Said the books, ‘ that seems like brain.’ ”

The analogy helps us to understand the way in which the union between the Logos and the human Jesus was consummated. At first it was real but incomplete; but as time went on, and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man, the Logos bestowed himself more and more fully, and the two natures became more and more intimately connected. At first the union was what might be called a natural or physical one. As the process of growth proceeded it became more and more an ethical or moral union. There was on the human side a sinless development of character, an opening to receive the divine. There was on the divine side an impartation of the divine perfections and a closer and more intimate indwelling. This moral union was consummated in the death of Christ, when the divine

and the human became perfectly united in the accomplishment of redemption. It was manifested in its perfection at the resurrection and ascension, when the Christ entered upon the exercise of his divine prerogatives.

What shall we say of these various theories? It is not very difficult to criticise them. In each there are elements of truth, which we gladly recognize, as well as defects which render their full acceptance impossible. The traditional theory rightly emphasizes the integrity of the two natures after the personal union has been constituted. It will not allow the Deity of Christ to be in the slightest degree infringed upon. It is true to the Gospel teachings when it finds the original centre of personal life rather in the divinity than in the humanity. The Christ who could say, "Before Abraham was, I am," and speak of the glory "which I had with the Father before the world was," certainly regarded the "I" which spoke as identical with the "I" of which pre-existence was predicated. God was in Christ in a truly personal sense reconciling the world unto Himself. And yet it cannot be denied that this view, by so sharply distinguishing the divine from the human, raises very grave difficulties. The idea of a double consciousness seems to sever the personal unity. The human experience of the Saviour, his physical, mental, and spiritual development, his temptation, sufferings, and death, loses its significance if it is to be predicated of his human nature alone while his divinity had no direct participation in it. It is difficult to see in what true sense the Logos emptied himself in the incarnation. There is a duality in the doctrine which we strive in vain to remove. The Kenosis theory relieves the difficulties just mentioned. It emphasizes the reality of the incarnation as an actual entering of the Logos into union with humanity. When the self-limitation has been effected, all duality disappears. There is but one consciousness, one process of development. The earthly ex-

perience of Christ belongs to the entire God-man and not merely to his human nature. The divinity, as well as the humanity, is all there in that one being, Jesus Christ. So long as we are dealing with the facts of the Gospel history this theory carries smoothly onward. But there is another side to it. What is this self-emptying Logos, divested of the divine attributes, only partially possessed of the divine consciousness? Is he divine? We say that the divine essence remains, though stripped of its attributes. But what is essence without attributes? It is possible for a being to relinquish the exercise of its attributes and remain itself, but when the attributes themselves are relinquished, what is left? Modern philosophy does not allow the old idea of qualities separable from substance; it teaches rather that a substance consists in its qualities. Take away from the stone that lies at your feet its extension, color, impenetrability, and other properties, and you have nothing left but that metaphysical ghost which philosophers have called the "thing in itself," which has no existence except in the mind. The Kenosis theory removes one set of difficulties by raising another far more serious. It explains Christ's earthly life at the expense of his divinity. The theory of progressive incarnation is not open to so great objections. It undoubtedly gives a luminous and beautiful explanation of the facts of Christ's earthly life. There is something novel and helpful in the idea of the reciprocity existing between the divine and human natures and their gradual mutual interpenetration and progressive union. But Dorner's view of the constitution of the theanthropic person, which is essential to the theory, gives rise to grave doubts. Christ does not speak as if his person went no farther back than the incarnation. He said, "The glory which *I* had with thee before the world was." This is not a new personality, constituted by the union of the divine and the human natures; it is in some true sense the

personality of the Logos. If it be urged that the personality of the Logos was not personality in the full sense of the term, since it belongs to the tripersonality of the Trinity, which must be subordinated to the unipersonality of God, still I affirm that the personality of the Logos, such as it was, must have been the central and essential element in the personality of the God-man. Dorner's theory, like the others, only partially solves the problem.

What, then, shall we say? The answer is plain. The problem is insoluble with our present knowledge. Each of the theories is valuable as far as we can make it work, and no farther. We acknowledge the laudable purpose and the loyalty to scriptural truth in all of them. They all of them aim to do justice to the various elements of the wonderful doctrine. Each emphasizes a class of facts which the others fail to bring into their deserved prominence. But the problem is too great. It has, and always must have, its mysterious side. Somehow or other, in some real and true sense, the Word became flesh. He laid aside his heavenly glory and relinquished for a time the exercise of the divine attributes. The divine person became a theanthropic person. There was a real submitting to human limitations. The Son of God took part in some true way in the development of the human Jesus. It was not merely the human nature that passed from infancy to childhood, and from childhood to youth and manhood, that was tempted and suffered and died and rose again; it was the God-man, the divinely human person. It was he who was weak, and in some things ignorant. It was he who prayed to the Father. In him God had a truly human experience and wrought out a salvation that was the work at once of God and man. There was one consciousness, covering an extent vastly greater than ours, yet as truly one. During all the state of humiliation there were reminiscences of the glory before the world was, and presentiments of the power and divine

majesty in the future. Such are the facts which the New Testament seems to require us to accept. But we admit that we are incompetent to explain them. The farther we penetrate into the mystery, the profounder it becomes. The theologian who has pondered the subject for years, and studied all the theories, cannot answer the questions which his own little child puts to him.

IV. There still remains the problem of the present nature of the Christ. He has ascended into glory and sitteth at the right hand of God. If the divine was subject to human limitations on earth, it is so no longer. The exaltation of the Christ has restored all that the self-emptying took from him. He is once more in the exercise, as well as in the possession, of the divine attributes. But what is the relation now of the divine and the human in him? How does his person stand related to his natures? Undoubtedly in the main there has been no change. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He is, and continueth to be, God and man, in two natures and one person forever. All the wealth of his human experience is preserved, and through his manhood he is still our merciful and faithful High-Priest.

But have his divine attributes been communicated to his human nature? He promised his disciples that he would be with them always, even unto the end of the world (Matt. xxviii. 20). How is this presence effected? Is the human nature omnipresent since the glorification of Christ? So say the Lutherans, as we have already seen, moved thereto by their doctrine of the Lord's Supper. That Christ's human nature should be present in a true sense in a thousand worshipping assemblies at the same time, and communicated to every one who partakes of the consecrated bread and wine, this must be the case. And even though we may hold a wholly different doctrine of the sacrament, there is much in the theory of Christ's human omnipresence to commend it to our accept-

ance. The ordinary view in our branch of the Protestant church is that Christ is present only by his Spirit. His humanity is circumscribed and local. It is now in heaven, the place where God manifests His highest glory. It is as truly absent from us as are our friends who have passed from earth and gone to be with him. We ask, what it means for Christ to be with us by his Spirit? Is it not a real presence? When he dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. iii. 17), is it not a real indwelling? Is he in reality far from us in his humanity? And so to those who think most deeply on this subject, and with most real longing for personal communion with the human Christ, the Lutheran view has great attractiveness, even though they may not see their way clear to accept it. But when all is said, we find that we are once more in the realm of mystery. That Christ is with us in his humanity we know. But how it is effected we do not know. We must accept the fact in the silence of faith and leave its explanation to the time of fuller knowledge.

And so it is with all the aspects of this wonderful doctrine of Christ. It stands alone, a fact unmatched in the whole realm of knowledge. As has been truly said, we cannot explain it because it is unique, because there are no other facts of the same class with which we may compare it. If we take it as a mere doctrine, that is, as a series of propositions, it is easy enough. We can readily string together the words that define and describe the person of Christ, thinking we understand them because they are logically combined. But it is different when we think deeply upon the fact. It is fact, the reality of which we cannot doubt. It rests upon a solid historical basis in the scriptural record. We cannot explain the life and character of Jesus upon any other assumption than that of his divinity. But the fact itself, how wonderful, how passing knowledge! We accept it, not because we can explain it, but because it explains everything else.

And so we leave the paths of the intellect, which carry us into darkness and mystery, and follow the humbler but brighter path of Christian faith, striving to know the Saviour personally and to live in his strength. In this way there is the certainty of higher knowledge. The life of love and faith opens vistas through which we see deep into the heart of the mystery. Now we know in part and prophesy in part. But it shall not always be so. We have the promise that at last we shall "see him as he is" (1 John iii. 2). When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. So let us wait in patience.

X.

RELATION OF CHRIST TO GOD AND THE CREATION

EVERY thinking man must have some theory of the first principles and causes of things, and when he puts it into systematic form and applies it to the different spheres of being—the Infinite, the world, and man—it becomes a philosophy. Paul thus sets forth his philosophy: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things and by him all things consist, and he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Col. i. 16-18). The apostle, true to the Gospel which he preached, finds his explanation of things in redemption, and in him who is at once the source, the agent, and the goal of redemption, Jesus the Christ. In his conception the facts and truths of the universe center in the Redeemer. He is the Mediator who binds together God, the higher intelligences, the world, and humanity. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii. 3). Over against the "wisdom of this world," the lore of the Jewish Rabbins, and the philosophies of Greece and Rome, Paul sets "Christ, the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 20, 24).

But it is not my purpose at this time to present the doctrine of Christ as a philosophy. Rather I desire to bring out some aspects of the doctrine, thus far only

touched upon, that are connected with the relations in which the Saviour stands to God and the creation. Nevertheless, I shall be glad if an incidental result of our discussion shall be to emphasize the fact which is essential to the idea of the doctrine as a philosophy, that Christ is the key to the great problems of the universe. It is thus that we shall best prove the reasonableness of this central fact of the Christian system. Like all the great fundamental truths with which the human mind has to do, it is rooted in mystery. We saw this when, in the last discourse, we examined the important Christological problems and frankly admitted our inability to solve them. But the doctrine of Christ, though it may be in itself mysterious, evidences its reasonableness by the light it throws upon other facts. It is like the sun, into which we cannot look for its excess of brightness, but which is the light of all our seeing.

I. We consider, first, the relation of Christ to God.

He is the eternal Son, the Word, the Image, of God. Doubtless these terms are used in part to describe God's relation to the world. But they convey also a deeper meaning, giving us a glimpse, though imperfect, into the internal life of God. Especially is this the case with the term Son. It points to an eternal fact in the divine existence. There is Fatherhood and Sonship in God. There is a relation which finds its best analogy and expression in the words which describe one of the closest and tenderest of earthly relations. What are the essential characteristics of the bond which exists between the human father and son? A common nature, love, fellowship, community of purpose and act. Such is the relation of the divine Father and Son. The Deity is not a bare unity. There is in it a fulness of life. There is a reciprocity and intercourse of love, a mutual dependence, a unity which is a union of differences. But shall we push the analogy further? The human child owes his existence to his

father. Is it so with the divine Son? We cannot admit an absolute beginning. That would carry us back to the old Arian heresy. But many Orthodox theologians have taught an eternal generation of the Son—and have darkened the subject by words which convey no intelligible meaning. Again, the human son is a distinct person from the parent. They possess a common nature but not the same nature. And at first it seems as though we might find the same distinction between the divine Father and Son. But, as we shall see, when we come to the doctrine of the Trinity, these two possess the same essence, and though we call them “First Person” and “Second Person,” we do so in a technical theological sense, which is not the same as that in which the term person is commonly employed. We maintain the *tripersonality* of God only so far as it is consistent with the *unipersonality* of God. All the great theologians, from the days of Augustin, have admitted the inadequacy of this word person. But let us not think that the Father and the Son are less than persons. Rather we have here a relation which transcends our conceptions of personality. And we are to hold fast to the terms Father and Son as bringing us nearest to the understanding of the transcendent fact.

The title which John applies to the pre-existent Christ, the Word, directs our thought chiefly to the self-revelation of God, yet it does not exhaust its meaning in the external relation of revelation. When he says that the Word “was in the beginning with God” (John i. 1, 2) he points to an eternal inward relation. The Word is the vehicle of our thought. It is, so to speak, the objectified thought. Max Müller has recently written a book to prove that thought is impossible without words. And whether or not he goes too far, yet this at least we may say, that there is little thought which is not either in words or what stands for words. When we think a subject over, we put it into words and see how it looks. The word is a

man's *alter Ego*, his other self. So was the Word the eternal self-expression of the Deity, the objectified thought of God, His other self, His companion. It was in the mirror of the Word that God saw His eternal plan reflected. We come back to that relation of confidence and love and mutual intercourse which the term Son expresses. Son and Word suggest different aspects of the same ineffable truth.

There remains the designation of the pre-existent Christ as the Image of God. This also seems to apply not only to the revelation of God, but also to His internal being. The idea it suggests is not unlike that conveyed by the term Word. In His image God sees Himself and finds, as it were, another self. Here once more is the intercourse and reciprocity of love. We take the three together—Son, Word, Image—and find in them the certainty and the sufficient, if not complete, expression, of the mysterious relation of the Son to the Father.

The language I have used may have seemed to imply a reference solely to the pre-existent Christ. But this was not my meaning. The exalted Christ, the God-man, sitting to-day upon the throne of majesty above, so far as his divine nature is concerned, stands in this relation to God. He is still the Son, the Word, the uncreated Image. But this is not the whole. He is man as well as God, and his two natures are bound together in the unity of his theanthropic person. And this means that in some ineffable but real way, humanity has been taken into the life of the Deity, and that not temporarily but forever. We talk of the marvels of the Gospel. It is a marvel that God should have stooped to redeem mankind, that He should become incarnate, that for thirty-three years He should have experienced the vicissitudes of human life, that He should have tasted death, in the dying of the Christ. It is a marvel that we should be forgiven and assured of salvation. It is a marvel that God should

take up His abode in our sinful hearts through the Holy Spirit, that we might become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). It is a marvel that God should permit us to dwell forever with Him. But an incomparably greater marvel is this eternal union of the Deity with manhood in the person of the Christ. Man shares the counsels of God. Man sits upon the throne of power. Man wields the sceptre of government. Our great High-priest is the Man, who suffered and died, who on earth was tempted in all points like as we are. We talk of the dignity of manhood. Here is the foundation of it all. It is because through Christ our humanity is thus forever united with God, that we may hope to be forever with Him. The manhood of the God-man is the great magnet in the center of the universe which is drawing all men unto it. The Christian sees the true humanity there in Christ, and he is dead, and his life is hid with Christ in God (Col. iii. 3).

And then, the Christ is the revelation of God. The terms which we have discussed in their reference to the internal relations of God all have their outward look as well. The Son is the Father's messenger. The Word makes known the divine nature and purpose, and does the divine work. The Image bodies forth the divine being. In reality the two facts stand in the closest connection. It is because the Son stands in his own peculiar relation to the Deity in its internal nature that he becomes the principle of revelation. Only God can reveal God. There can be no intermediary that is of a lower essence than God. And only God can perform the divine work of redemption. The Mediator must be divine. For he comes not merely with a knowledge about God, but with the actual manifestation of the divine nature and power. It is not, however, the divine Son alone who is the Revealer and Saviour. It is the Christ, the God-man, the incarnate Son. Manhood was made receptive of the di-

vine. It was created not only by Christ but for Christ. The revelation which Christ makes is of the divine in humanity, of the Infinite in the finite. He gives a picture and representation of God, as it were, in miniature. The divine Son works out a perfect human sonship in his human nature, so that when the testimony came from the opened heavens, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17), it was one theanthropic sonship that was meant, the divine Sonship expressed in a perfect human sonship. So the uncreated Image of God was stamped upon the humanity in such a way as to make a perfect human image of God. Man was created at first in the divine image and sin marred the work. Christ restored it in his own humanity. And then, the divine Word found utterance in those human words such as never man spake.

It was a wonderful method of self-revelation which God chose, the method of the incarnation. While he was still on earth, in his state of humiliation, Christ could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). To everyone who had the spiritual eyes to see him as he was, he was God on earth. His character, his words, his acts all bore the impress of the divine upon them. And still more should he be to us who live in these latter days the revelation of the divine. For now he is upon the throne. We see him as he is. We can take that marvellous picture of his earthly life which the New Testament records, and add to it the personal knowledge of the Saviour which has come to us through the experience of his gracious presence and power. In the synthesis of a living faith the Christ, who eighteen centuries ago walked with weary feet the rough roads of Palestine, and the King in his glory, the Messiah of God, are one. It is our privilege to receive the answer to the Apostle's prayer, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. iii. 17).

To know God is the great need of mankind ; not to know Him merely in an intellectual way, but in that personal and spiritual knowledge which John says is eternal life (John xvii. 3). For this the soul cries out. For such knowledge the world has longed and labored and sought during all the ages of human history. How little has been the success ! What conceptions have not men formed of God ! Every absurdity of which men are capable, every atrocity which the devil's ingenuity has ever devised, has been ascribed to our Creator and Father. In Jesus Christ mankind has received the perfect revelation. Here and here alone is the truth in its simplicity and its greatness.

II. Let us now look for a moment at the relation in which Christ stands to the higher intelligences of the universe. The existence of such beings is clearly taught by the Scriptures. They are the invisible background of the redemptive revelation, coming into visibility at all its great crises. I speak of the angels as higher intelligences. In some respects they are higher, in others lower, than man. In power and purity they are above him, fit to dwell in the presence of the Most High and do His bidding. When Christ taught us to pray, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," he set the angels before us as a model. But in other respects the angels are lower than men. They are pure spirits. They do not, therefore, stand in those manifold relations to the material world which belong to man, who is at once spirit and body. If organization is a test of rank in the hierarchy of the universe, man stands above the angels. Of him it can be said, as it cannot of the angels, that he is the microcosm, the universe in miniature, for in him all the spheres and departments of the universe find their living center. Martensen has truly said :

"Although the angel, in relation to man, is the more powerful spirit, man's spirit is nevertheless the richer and

the more comprehensive. For the angel in all his power is only the expression of a single one of all those phases which man, in the inward nature of his soul, and the richness of his own individuality, is intended to combine into a complete and perfect microcosm" ("Dogmatics," Eng. trans., p. 132; see the whole passage, pp. 127-136, to which I would express my obligations).

The divine Son "took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. ii. 16). In these high beings the law of service is perfected. They are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. i. 14). They live not for themselves but to do the work of God's kingdom.

To the angels Christ stands in an original and intimate relation. He created them and assigned them their rank and place in the universe. They attended him in all his earthly life and ministry. They are his messengers and ministers in his heavenly glory. His redemptive work has broken the power of Satan and his kingdom of fallen angels. They are to appear before his judgment-seat and receive their final doom (2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6). The same redemption is to bring together in blessed reconciliation all things in heaven and on earth, and to sum them up in him (Col. i. 20; Eph. i. 10). At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 10, 11).

III. We come to the relation of Christ to the world. It would have been a bold claim on the part of the apostles, had they not been guided by the Spirit of revelation, that Jesus of Nazareth, the man who went about with them in the days of Pilate's Procuratorship, was the Maker of the universe. But this was what they asserted.

For they held that united with that manhood and behind that veil of flesh was the Creator Himself. When they looked upward to Christ, the King upon the throne, they recognized in him the power and wisdom that called the universe into being. No language could be more explicit than that of John, who gives this truth the foremost place in his Gospel, the unknown author of the epistle to the Hebrews, who likewise presents the facts in the opening words of his book, and Paul, who makes it an essential element in his Christian philosophy. Consider what it means. Think of the immensity of the planet on which we live. Then take your flight in thought across the ninety millions of miles between us and the sun. Then pass from star to star, where all measurement fails, beyond the farthest point of light the telescope reveals. He made it all, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us, the Being who in his divinely human person is to-day our King and Saviour, our elder Brother. Or if our minds are confused by the thought of greatness in space, consider the infinite complexity and beauty of the smallest organism, as the microscope discloses it to us. And then, he not only made, but he upholds and guides them all. "In him all things consist" (Col. i. 17). He has held together from the first this universe of atoms and forces. He has been the source of all energy and activity and life, the life of the natural world as he is the life of the soul (John i. 4).

182 { It is his wisdom that has been displayed in the progress of evolution out of the primitive chaos into the cosmos—the building of the planetary system, the shaping of our earth, the formation of its physical features, the development of its living forms, the long, slow, wonderful process of upward-climbing movement from the protozoön to the man. Christ, the Word who became flesh. The words come too easily, and our thought cannot keep pace with them. We believe it but we do not realize it. It is

at once the strongest argument against Christianity and the strongest argument for it. To the understanding it is impossible, mere vaunt of good-hearted but weak-minded Christians. But there is a divine audacity in the doctrine which to the spiritual mind is the proof of its truth. Here is a pass-key which opens so many locks that we cannot discard it. It is because Christ explains everything that we believe him indeed Lord of all things. When his sun rises, the shadows flee away.

The world was made that it might be the theatre for Christ's redemptive work. Looking at the subject broadly, we may say that the whole universe was made for this purpose; for, as we have seen, all orders of being are concerned in some way or other with redemption. But more particularly our own earth was made for this end. Here God's kingdom was to be established. Here the divine Son was to become incarnate, to live and die. Unbelievers often declare that Christianity has lost its meaning, since the Ptolemaic system of astronomy has given place to the Copernican. Christianity makes this planet the center of the universe, the object of God's especial love, upon which His greatest efforts have been expended. But science has shown that the earth is but an insignificant speck in the fathomless depths of space, an unimportant satellite of one of the lesser suns. Some of our modern apologists have been at great pains to prove, and with not a little plausibility of argument, that the earth is the only planet in our system habitable by beings like ourselves, and that there is little reason to suppose that the other heavenly bodies possess systems of planets like our own (Ebrard, "Christian Apologetics," Eng. trans., vol. i., pp. 353-365). It is not the size of our earth or its position in the universe which gives it its importance. The poet says,

"Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."

So we may say, "Better a little world like ours with man on it and God purposing to redeem it, than a thousand suns each a thousand times the size of ours." And even supposing that the other worlds were all inhabited, it would not prove that this earth was not of more importance in God's sight than all the rest. God's standard of importance, as it has been revealed to us in the Gospel, is very different from ours. The greatest need lays the greatest claim upon His love. Just as there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance (Luke xv. 7), so there may be joy in God's heart to labor for the redemption of one sinful world like ours, compared with which his rejoicing over a thousand unfallen worlds is as nothing. And were there a thousand fallen worlds in which God had manifested Himself as the Redeemer through Christ, each of them would be a center, in which the love and efforts and hopes and sympathies of God and all holy beings would be bound up. We shall not let science, with all its unquestionable truths, rob us of the meaning of those sublime words, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son" (John iii. 16).

It is this destination of the world to be the theatre of Christ's redemption that explains the existence of what is otherwise an insoluble mystery, namely suffering, disease, and death. God knew that men would become sinners, and He intended to provide salvation for them. And so He arranged things in such a way that this world should be a place of discipline and trial. Suffering and death were the check upon sin which He provided, the means of spiritual growth, the punishment for incorrigible wrongdoing. In a world that was to be sinless they would have been an anomaly. In a world of sin, where redemption was to be the great object of God's activities, they are a blessing. The divine Word who created this world, established that law of suffering and death which was to

afford the means of his own atoning work when he should become incarnate in the Christ. From the first the "sign of the Son of man," the mark of the cross, has been on the earth. The fossils of the oldest rocks are in a true sense types of the Christ; they prophecy the Saviour's death.

The doctrine of Christ and his redemption emphasizes the difference between Christianity and most of the heathen religions and philosophies in their view of the material world. Heathenism regarded matter as evil; redemption consisted in deliverance from it. Christ teaches us the excellency of matter. Christ made it, in the person of the Logos. He manifested his relation to it when "the Word became flesh." It is a matter of no small importance that Christ on his human side became a link in the chain of evolution. Though he was divine, and though his human birth was a miracle, entirely out of the sphere of natural development, yet he condescended to enter into the realm of nature. He took to himself matter, an animal nature, a human nature. In the light of the incarnation let no man call the material world common or unclean. Christ has shown us its true character. And as he thus entered nature and eternally linked himself with it, so he gave the assurance of the redemption even of physical nature. We have touched upon the subject already. We shall come to it again in the doctrine of the resurrection. But the fact cannot be too often asserted and emphasized. There is no physical disorder that shall not be righted, no evil that shall not be overcome. This is Christ's world, not the Devil's world. The pledge of his ownership and its final regeneration is the material body of the glorified Christ. At the Last Day he is to return in like manner as he ascended into Heaven (Acts i. 11), to complete the redemption of the material world, as well as the redemption of the race.

IV. This brings us to the relation of Christ to mankind.

The divine Word was not only the Creator of the higher intelligences and the world, but also of man. In an especial sense he was the creator of man, since he made him in the image of God, and he, as we have seen, was the eternal uncreated Image of God. As men, we bear the image of the Son. It is in virtue of this fact that we are by birthright the sons, the children, of God. Since from the first God knew that men would sin and that thus the image of God in them would be defaced, the birthright of sonship renounced, the Logos made man that he might be redeemed. The manhood which he made was the manhood in which he was to become incarnate, that he might restore the marred image and give men back their lost sonship. God sent His Son that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal. iv. 4, 5).

I pass over the work of the Logos for mankind before his incarnation, to which reference has been made in a previous chapter, and come to his earthly life as the God-man.

178. { He was the ideal man. The perfect manhood which was in the thought of God, when He through the Logos created the first member of the race, was wrought out and realized in the life of the Christ. Adam never attained this ideal. He was indeed created sinless and destined for the good. He was "very good" (Gen. i. 31) in the sense that no evil had yet entered into his life to mar it. But he stood at the beginning of his career when he fell. { He was but a child, far from having reached the maturity of manhood in God's kingdom, which lay in the divine ideal. Men, since him, have been imperfect specimens of humanity. Only one man has ever begun at the beginning and gone steadily forward to the goal, and that man was the Christ, the Second Adam. It was in the moral character and development of Christ that he especially exhibited the true manhood. There is no reason to believe that he was appointed to show forth in his bodily

nature the ideal of physical beauty which human art partially succeeds in representing. Christ possessed a true human body. But it was only after his resurrection that it became the glorious body to which the believer's body is finally to be conformed (Phil. iii. 21). Art has caught only glimpses of the glory that is to be. It was the spiritual beauty of the human ideal which Christ exhibited while on earth. He lived entirely for the kingdom of God. He realized the kingdom perfectly in his life, for it was his meat to do the will of his Father in heaven, and he did it perfectly, even as it is done in heaven. His relation to God was that of perfect filial love. As we have already observed, the divine Son expressed his nature in a perfect human sonship, the two corresponding to each other like the seal and the impression. He loved mankind with a perfect love. In him were united perfect self-forgetfulness and perfect self-sacrifice. That spirit of brotherhood which is at last to make the race one was exemplified in him. He possessed that many-sidedness which belongs to the highest ideal of manhood. His love and interest took in the whole world with all its individuals, all its spheres of activity, and all its institutions. Christ was the most public-spirited man that ever lived. He was not only the redeemer, but the philanthropist and the reformer. He was the model of the good citizen, while in the humbler spheres of life he was the model son and brother, the kind neighbor, the true and faithful friend. Then notice how the elements were mixed in him, strength of intellect, extending to marvellous insight into nature and man; strength of will, that wise, deliberate choice of good, which is true always to the right, yet never runs into wilfulness or stubbornness; depth and tenderness of sensibility. Christ blended the tenderness and gentleness of womanhood with the strength and firmness of manhood, the simplicity of the child with the shrewdness of the man of the world.

Christ attained this character by passing through a complete and wholly human moral development. He climbed the ladder of moral perfection slowly and by discipline. He was made perfect by suffering (Heb. ii. 10). He was tempted in all points like as we are. There are those who think that such a process of moral development implies imperfection and sin. But this is not the case. There may be growth where there is no imperfection. Christ attained at each stage in his moral development the perfection appropriate to that stage, until he had reached the highest. There are some, also, who think that in order that Christ's experience should be altogether human and that he should be able to sympathize with us as our High-priest, he should have had some personal experience of sin. At least, they say, he must have been born with that sinful nature or those tendencies to sin which all men inherit from their ancestors. But they are wrong. The perfect manhood is a sinless manhood, sinless from the start, and free from every taint of sin, even ancestral proclivities to sin. That Christ might attain the ideal of humanity, he must start where Adam started, not where we start, and he must go right onward without tripping or falling till he reached the goal. Christ was not like us or tempted like us in all points. It was not needful that he should be. Or rather, it was needful that he should not be. People have an idea in these days that the reformed drunkard can do more for his fallen fellows than he who never fell. I doubt it. But however it may be with us, who are sinners at the best, in the case of Christ the sinless development was essential to his capacitation for his saving work.

Moreover, Christ was—and in a still higher sense is—the universal man, the Head of the race, the second Adam. Men are made to be under heads. There are individuals everywhere in society who rule over their fellows by a divine right. "There is no power but of God ;

and the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. xiii. 1). In the family, in the state, in society, in business, in literature, in art, there must be leaders. The solidarity of men includes not only their union but their union under individual men. The qualifications for headship in humanity are twofold—natural endowment and character. A man who is to be a leader of his fellows must be a born leader. He must have a many-sided nature, a strong will, a large and capable intellect, quick sensibilities and sympathies. The majority of men are born to follow the lead of others. Not one in a thousand has the qualities which enable him to think and act for himself, to say nothing of his thinking and acting for others. But the born leader is a king from his infancy. The children in their plays follow his lead. But leadership demands something more than natural qualifications. Character gives the finishing to what nature begins. Character is the man's own, the outcome of his free will. It lies in the great life-choices which he makes and the habits which he forms in accordance with these choices. Character begins in self-conquest. He who will rule must first reduce the realm within to subjection. The true king is he who has the kingdom of God set up in his soul, a kingdom in which he is a humble subject. Even worldly selfishness catches something of the secret of greatness and prudently denies itself that it may thus gain influence over men. But in every case there is the deliberate choice of great ends and a long process of self-discipline by which the character thus established is confirmed. If you will find the secret of Luther's power over men, look to his struggles with his own heart in the monastery at Erfurt. When a man is thus doubly fitted for his work, he goes to his divinely ordained task with true kingly power. Men know him for what he is and accept him as their leader.

Jesus Christ was destined to be the leader not of a part of the race, but of mankind; not in a single sphere, but

in the sphere of universal manhood. The first Adam was the head of the race only because he stood first in the line. His relation was physical rather than spiritual. The second Adam was the Head in all that raises man above the animal, at once leader and redeemer. He possessed both the qualifications of which I have spoken. He was a born king. All those qualities which enable a man to hold sway over his fellows were his from the start. {The world has never seen such a large-brained, clear-sighted, many-sided man, with strength of will and breadth of sympathies like his. We catch a glimpse of this wonderful natural endowment in the words and acts of the twelve-year-old boy in the temple. Of him might be used, in a far higher sense than the poet meant them, the words Shakespeare puts into Antony's mouth as descriptive of Brutus :

“ His life was gentle ; and the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, ‘ This was a man ! ’ ”

But Christ did not only possess this natural endowment, he built upon this foundation the noble edifice of his character and work. The thirty years which preceded his ministry are passed lightly over in the Gospels ; but there is no reason to suppose that they were less decisive in his case than in that of other men. They were the years when his character was formed, when he made the choice of God's kingdom as the chief end of all his living, when he strengthened his resolves by habits slowly and painfully established. The fact that he never sinned does not alter the other fact, that he became what he was through discipline, self-denial, submission to God's will. When Satan tempted him, he found in him not only the God but the self-controlled, disciplined man, against the rock of whose thoroughly formed character his temptations

were shattered like the winter surges when they beat against the crags on our Maine coast. When, therefore, the Saviour entered upon his ministry all recognized him as a leader, and the good and true flocked about him, while the evil and faithless fought against him with an almost demoniacal rage. Israel was looking for a leader, looking for the Christ, and the word on every lip was, "Is not this he? is not this the Christ?"

But there was still another stage through which the Saviour was to pass before he became in truth the Head of Mankind, the second Adam. His work of redemption on earth completed his qualification for his high office as the King of men. I shall not go far into this subject, for we shall go over the same ground when we come to the consideration of Christ's work. Here but a few words. The years of his ministry brought him into contact with the men he came to save. He learned all the misery of mankind. He took human suffering and sin upon his heart. That strange power men have to enter into each other's experiences enabled him to enter into the understanding of sin as no other man ever did—or could. Then he, too, suffered. The wrath of men wreaked itself upon his innocent head. He was subject to contumely, to reproach, to persecution. Finally, he was slain, slain by those whom he loved and had come to save, by a mockery of justice. Death, that awful consequence of sin, in which God's wrath against sin is expressed in all its rigor, fell on him, though sinless, because he was the sinner's Saviour. I shall not speak here of his atonement. I am concerned only to show how Christ was thus fitted for his kingly office, how he became the Head and Leader of the race, the Second Adam. The captain of our salvation was made perfect by suffering. It was thus he became the Captain, the Leader and King, that he is. No kingship was ever won by fairer and completer effort. He is our Lord to-day because he went through all the toilsome way

of his humiliation and suffering that he might gain the crown. So is he our Redeemer and our King—Redeemer because King, and King because Redeemer.

In conclusion, let me say a word touching a current controversy. The question is earnestly discussed in our times whether theology as a system is Christocentric or Theocentric, whether it centers in Christ or in God. Is the governing principle by which its orderly system is developed derived from the doctrine of God or the doctrine of Christ? I do not attempt to decide the question. But I wish to call attention to the results of our discussion in the present chapter. Does not Christ stand in such a relation to the great facts with which theology has to do that he throws upon them that central light by which alone they can be understood? Must we not, if we will know God, the universe, and man, first know something of Christ? The God of nature we know by the natural revelation. But the God of grace, how can we know Him except as we see him in the face of Jesus Christ? And how can we know the world and man, except as we view them in their relation to him who is at once Creator and Redeemer?

XI.

THE TRINITY

ST. AUGUSTIN begins one of the books in his treatise on the Trinity with the following words: "I pray to our Lord God Himself, of whom we ought always to think, and of whom we are not able to think worthily, in praise of whom blessing is at all times to be rendered, and whom no speech is sufficient to declare, that He will grant me both help for understanding and explaining that which I design, and pardon if in anything I offend" (De Trin., V. i. 1). We may well take the prayer as our own as we enter upon our present discussion. The doctrine of the Trinity is in some respects the most sacred in the Christian system. It carries us into the inmost secrets of the Deity. Into this sanctuary of the Christian faith we do not enter by the way of worldly knowledge, but by him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We know the Trinity through the Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity is a corollary of the doctrine of the Christ.

I. We begin by a brief examination of the scriptural teachings on the subject; and first we look at the Old Testament. We often hear it said, that the doctrine of the Trinity belongs exclusively to the New Testament. But this is not the fact. It is true that, like all the distinctive truths of the Gospel, the doctrine of the Trinity is found in its developed form only in the later and crowning dispensation of the redemptive revelation. These truths, however, all have their roots in the revelation of the Old Testament, and that of the Trinity is no exception. The essential elements of the doctrine are

two, the divine unity and the divine trinality. Both of these elements must be maintained, if the truth is to be held in its completeness. In the Old Testament the unity is emphasized, and we can discover good reasons why this should be the case. In the first place, the trinality of God could not be understood in its relation to the unity until the incarnation had thrown its light upon it. And then—what was perhaps an even more cogent reason—the first need of Israel, the people chosen to be God's special instrument in His redemptive revelation, was to be delivered from the idolatry of the surrounding heathenism. In the presence of polytheism in its worst and most seductive forms, the divine unity must be emphasized. Jehovah revealed Himself as the *one* God. The fundamental commandment was, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. xx. 3). The Israelite confessed his faith then, as he does to-day, in the words, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one God" (Deut. vi. 4).

But strict as was the monotheism of the Old Testament, it contains in it the elements of the doctrine of the Trinity, which in the light of the higher revelation we can clearly discover. Our examination of the doctrine of Christ has shown us that, in the theophanies of the Old Testament and the predictions of a divine Messiah, there are intimations of a Being who is at once God and yet distinguishable from Jehovah. The facts do not permit us to say that Christ is predicted in the Old Testament merely as a human King. Moreover, the Old Testament doctrine of the Spirit distinguishes between God and the mysterious agency through which He works in nature and man. It is true that the Spirit is regarded by the sacred writers for the most part as the impersonal power of God. But more and more, as revelation advances, there is a tendency to ascribe personality to the Spirit; and whether or not the personality is recognized, the Spirit is in the highest sense divine, and all that is needed to make the per-

sonality appear is the higher truth of the Spirit's office which Christ was to reveal. I am not asserting that the Israelites themselves, even those who stood on the mountain-tops of inspiration, recognized a Trinity. All I assert is, that when they were brought to the higher revelations of the Gospel, they found enwrapped in their old doctrine of God all the elements of the doctrine of the Trinity.

The New Testament discloses the truth in all its fullness. There are indeed those who declare that, because we find only a few passages in which the elements of the doctrine are brought together with something of the exactitude of a doctrinal statement, the New Testament evidence for this great fact is meagre and insufficient. But these few passages do not furnish us with the chief evidence upon which Trinitarians rely. The whole theological basis of the New Testament is Trinitarian. The following facts appear on almost every page: God is one; the Father is God, yet distinguishable from the Son and the Spirit; the Son is God, both in his pre-existent and incarnate states, yet distinguishable from the Father and the Spirit; the Holy Ghost is God, yet distinguishable from the Father and the Son. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all described as personal. We find these facts not only expressed in the direct statements of the sacred writers, but implied in all their teachings, appearing wherever we can perceive the drift and tendency of their theological thought. The redemptive grace of God is ascribed to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost alike. They all appear in the divine activities by which the work of God's kingdom is carried forward. The divine attributes are freely attributed to all. In a word, the threefold cord of this great doctrine is everywhere inwoven in the texture of the New Testament.

But while this is the case, I am far from undervaluing the few texts which bring the elements of the doctrine

together with something of the exactitude of a theological formula. The most important of these is the so-called "baptismal formula:" "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19). In order to appreciate the full force of these words, we must consider by whom they were uttered and under what circumstances, as well as the purpose for which they were uttered. They were our Saviour's last words before his ascension, the "great commission" which he gave his disciples, and which was to be their guide during all the ages of the Christian church. They related to the most important rite of the church. They were words which our Saviour knew would be repeated as each new convert, during the centuries to come, should be admitted to the Christian brotherhood. What occasion could have been more solemn and significant? Moreover, we must remember what the terms employed meant to those first disciples. The *name* of God carried with it to the Jewish mind the whole meaning of the divine nature. To us names are arbitrary and inexpressive. We call our children John, Hannibal, Anna, Helen, according to our kindred, our associations, or our fancy; and, so far as any real significance in the names is concerned, we might as well invent new names, or designate persons by numbers, as they do the prisoners in the galleys. But it was not so with the Hebrew. All his names were significant, and most of all the names of God. The divine names were revelations. At first God was called El Shaddai, the Almighty God (Gen. xvii. 1). He was the powerful Being who protected His people and brought judgment to their enemies. Then He revealed Himself under the covenant name Jahveh or Jehovah (Ex. vi. 3), the great *I Am*, the free, independent God of the redemptive revelation, undetermined in His action by anything outside of Himself.

The Saviour concentrates his revelation of God as the God of grace in a new name. He is the Father. This is the name which points to the establishment of the New Covenant, as that of Jehovah did to the Old. His own name, too, is significant of his nature and relation to God, that name in which he directs his disciples to pray (John xiv. 13). But in his last command, as he gives directions respecting the sacred rite of admission to the Christian church, he gives the name which sums up in its completeness the revelation of the Gospel, the Triune Name. He does not say, "Baptize into the *names* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," but "into the *name*." It is One in Three, the God who is at once Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Every time that a child is sprinkled with the emblematic water and is recognized as a member of God's kingdom *de jure*, and a member of the visible church *de facto*, and every time that a convert from heathenism or the world is in the same way clothed with the highest privileges of the Christian name, the sacred doctrine of the Trinity is reaffirmed.

To this most important text may be added the apostolic benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all" (2 Cor. xiii. 14); and the striking language respecting the charisms of the primitive church, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all" (1 Cor. xii. 4-6). (Compare with these Eph. iv. 4-6; Rom. xi. 36.)

II. But I pass to consider the formulation of the doctrine in the Christian church. From the first it was held simply and unreflectingly by all Christians. It was only as controversy arose that the church found it needful to furnish a philosophical statement of the great truth. The development of thought upon the subject was direct-

ly connected with the controversies respecting the person of Christ. Indeed, the discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity formed a part of the Christological discussion. If Christ was divine, God in the fullest and highest sense, both before and after the incarnation, then the Deity is not a bare undistinguished unity. The question respecting the divinity of the Holy Spirit was one of minor importance, to be settled according to the issue of the main controversy. We have already touched upon the Christological disputes, but it will be needful briefly to refer to them again, so far as relates to the subject before us. First, however, let it be noted that the inadequate or heretical theories arose from laying undue emphasis upon one or the other of the two essential factors of the scriptural doctrine, the unity and the trinality of God. *Ebionism* put the entire stress upon the unity, making God one in the sense of the Old Testament, and reducing Christ to the level of mere manhood, while there was no talk of a Trinity even in the lowest sense. Then came *Sabellianism* in the third century, also emphasizing the divine unity, yet teaching at the same time the Deity of Christ, and, while not altogether excluding the trinality, still giving it a quite subordinate place. According to this view the names Father, Son, and Spirit do not designate eternal distinctions in the Godhead, but phases or aspects under which God has revealed Himself in time. In creation and the Old Dispensation God revealed Himself as the Father; in the Incarnation and the Redemptive work of Christ as the Logos or Son; in the Christian Dispensation as the Holy Spirit. But God in Himself is eternally one, and when redemption is completed these temporary modes of manifestation will have served their purpose and God will return into the unity of the Monas. *Arianism*, in the fourth century, which we have already considered in its relation to the person of the Redeemer, also endeavored, while laying the chief emphasis upon the

divine unity, to retain the trinality, and so made the Trinity an association between God and two exalted yet created beings, the Son and the Holy Spirit, neither of whom was divine in the true sense of the term. *Semi-Arianism* taught the eternity of the Son and the Spirit, but would admit only a likeness in essence to God, not their true Deity. Finally, *Tritheism* asserted the trinality with such emphasis as to destroy the unity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all divine in the highest sense; but they are three Gods, not one, so that the line which separates Christianity from polytheism is passed.

Between the rocks and shoals of these erroneous views the Christian church, holding fast to the simple teachings of the New Testament, steered its way. The doctrine, which was formulated in the creeds of Nicæa and Constantinople, has been accepted by the great majority of Christians in all ages, not because it was proclaimed by universal councils, but because it has commended itself to the Christian consciousness of the church as scriptural and true. The Orthodox doctrine, as we may truly call it—not as stigmatizing opposing views, but as affirming the common faith of Christendom—lays equal emphasis upon the unity and the trinality of God. All that is essential to it may be stated in the following propositions:

1. God is One ;
2. The Father is God ;
3. The Son is God ;
4. The Holy Spirit is God ;
5. Father, Son, and Spirit are eternally distinct.

Whoever can accept these propositions has all that is vital in the Orthodox faith.

But let us state the great truth in the technical terms of theology. God in His essence or nature is indivisibly One. To this one nature belong the divine attributes, infinity, eternity, immensity, immutability, omnipotence, omniscience, wisdom, holiness, righteousness, truth, and

love. There are not three Eternals, but only one Eternal. This one God is a personal Spirit. Herein Christianity agrees wholly with the theology of the Old Testament, and is as truly and profoundly monotheistic. But the higher revelation goes further and discloses in the unity of the Godhead three eternal distinctions, which are called, in the technical language of theology, hypostases or persons. The term person is not employed here as we understand it in the ordinary use of language. Ever since the days of Augustin it has been taken in a special and unusual sense. A person in the common use of the term is an individual, separate from other individuals. But Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not persons in this sense. Three human individuals may be said, as members of the same class, to possess a common nature; they are all men. But the three divine persons possess the same nature, the one identical essence. They do not divide it, they do not share it; it is their common nature in the sense that each possesses the whole in its indivisible unity. Moreover, there is a true sense in which God in His unity is a person. This is recognized alike in the common speech of men and in the language of the Christian consciousness. Accordingly, we must understand the *tripersonality* as existing consistently with the *unipersonality* of God. We define a person as a self-conscious, self-determining being, a subject, one who can use the pronoun I to describe itself. Now, the three persons of the Trinity are distinguished as in some sense distinct, self-conscious, and self-determining subjects. They use the pronouns I and Thou. Christ speaks of the "glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John xvii. 5). The names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit imply some such personal distinctions. Nevertheless, we cannot suppose that these personalities, these Egos or Selves, are bounded off and separated from each other, as is the case with men. Rather we are led to suppose that in the one self-consciousness of the infinite

God there are three distinct centers of self-consciousness, three distinct Egos which spring from and are merged in the one divine Ego. There is not entire agreement among Orthodox theologians upon this point, and with good reason. Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection? Is it strange if the personality of an infinite Being is something far more complex and far higher than personality in finite men? The closeness of the relation between the three persons is indicated in the teaching of Orthodox theology, that in each act of any one of the persons the other two participate. The Father does nothing alone, but in conjunction with the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus when the Son became incarnate, the whole Godhead participated in the act.

According to the Orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, the terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit designate the respective characteristics and the reciprocal relations of the three persons or hypostases—that is, they are not merely descriptive of their relations to the world and men, but truly denominate the internal relations of the Trinity. The Father stands in such relations to the Son as render these names fitting, and the relation of the third Person to both is such as is appropriately described by the title Spirit. These names also point to the fixed order or gradation which exists between the three persons. The three hypostases are equal in that each possesses the common essence; each is God in the highest and truest sense. But in their mutual relations there is a priority. The Father is the Head, the Source, so to speak, of the Trinity. He is in order—not, indeed, of time, but rather of mode of subsistence—before the Son. The Son stands in order after the Father. There is a sense in which he is dependent on the Father. The Holy Spirit comes after both and is dependent upon both. There is, in a word, such a relation that we properly use the designations, first, second, and third persons of the Trinity, and it would not be

proper to transpose this order. The relation of which I am speaking is commonly designated by theologians the "subordination" of the Son to the Father, and of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son. It is to be distinguished from that erroneous doctrine of subordination, of which Semi-Arianism is the best and highest example. The true subordination relates to the persons, but not to the essence. The false subordination extends to the essence itself. According to the Semi-Arians, the Son, though an eternal Being, is not God in the highest sense. He derives his existence from the Father. He is on the lower side of the line which separates the infinite from the finite. The true subordination is wholly a matter of the hypostases or persons. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are each God in the highest sense; each is Infinite in the highest and fullest sense. But between these distinctions of the Infinite Being there exists this relation of order, this subordination. It is in view of this fact, as Calvin says, that the Father is called by way of eminence, God. His words are:

"Since the peculiar properties of the Persons produce a certain order, so that the original cause is in the Father, whenever the Father and Son or Spirit are mentioned together, the name of God is peculiarly ascribed to the Father; by this method the unity of the essence is preserved, and the order is retained; which, however, derogates nothing from the Deity of the Son and Spirit" (Institutes, "Trans. of Presb. Board," vol. i., p. 136).

All the great theologians of the Christian church, since the days of the Council of Nice, have accepted this doctrine of subordination. (It has been asserted that Augustin is an exception, but this is denied by Dr. Shedd. See "The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers," vol. iii., p. 4). It is important that it should be understood, if we are to do justice to the teachings of the Scripture and the utter-

ances of the Christian consciousness. Orthodoxy requires that we should recognize the one divine nature as belonging in the fullest and highest sense to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but it equally requires that we should recognize the relation of priority and subordination (in the sense which has been explained) existing between the three persons.

III. I turn with a sense of relief from this branch of our subject. The controversies of the church have been largely concerned with the philosophy of theology. This has been the case especially with the doctrine of the Trinity. The question at stake has been of immense importance. The Greek letter *iota*, which distinguished the *homoiousion* from the *homoousion*, the doctrine of the likeness of nature in Father and Son from that of the sameness of their nature, marked a gap, the tremendous width and depth of which only those can realize who are familiar with the history of the church, and who know how the lower views of Christ and the Holy Spirit have always led to an ultimate abandonment of the distinctive doctrines of the Christian system. Nevertheless, the controversy has turned on the form rather than the matter of the great Christian doctrine of the Trinity. It has been looked at rather as a conception of the intellect, an abstraction, rather than the living fact that it is. So it has often happened that Christians, who have had erroneous doctrinal views upon the subject, have yet stood in such close personal communion with the Triune God, that their faith has put to shame the accurate but lifeless orthodoxy of their fellow-Christians. I ask you, then, to turn for a moment from the philosophical form of the doctrine and consider its contents.

What are the facts which the Christian doctrine of the Trinity brings to our knowledge? It reveals to us not a God who is a bare unity, dwelling alone through the ages of eternity, shut up in the contemplation of His own per-

fections, and emerging from His solitude only when He creates a world. Rather it makes known to us a God in whom there is an eternal fulness of life. There is in Him at once unity and plurality. He is self-sufficient, not in the sense of being wrapt up in solitary self-contemplation, but rather in the sense of containing in Himself all the elements of a blessed and holy fellowship. The New Testament gives its crowning revelation of God in the declaration, "God is Love" (1 John iv. 8, 16). In what sense is this true? only in His relations to His creatures? or is He love in His eternal essence? Christian theology has always replied that He is eternally and essentially love. But what is love to God? If we think of Him only in His unity, it is hard to avoid the conception of a self-love which is not far removed, if at all, from that selfishness which is the principle of sin. It is not to be denied that God has often been so represented, that the impression has been created that He is the supremely selfish Being—so that unconsciously men have allowed the conceptions of God and the Devil to change places in their minds. But the doctrine of the Trinity reveals the fact that God is Love in the truest sense. In the eternal existence of God there is that plurality which alone renders love possible. For love implies personal relations of some sort. It is a self-communication, a self-bestowal. There must be fellowship, something that answers to society among us. Doubtless the relation of the blessed Three is far closer than any relation between man and man. I have no wish to teach the Tritheistic doctrine of a "social Trinity." But allowing for the coexistence of tripersonality with unipersonality in God, still there is that reciprocal communion, that relation of self to self, which love requires for its existence. God is Love. That is the key which unlocks the mystery of the Trinity.

But farther—the doctrine of the Trinity throws light upon this life of love in the Deity. There is Fatherhood

and Sonship there. I have touched upon this subject in the last chapter; but it will do no harm to repeat. The relation of parent and child has its archetype in the Godhead. Natural theology teaches us to look at the Deity as exalted in majesty far above mankind, as the great Ruler whose will is law, and whose law is fate. Christianity brings God near to us in its teaching of the eternal Father and the eternal Son. Its revelation to us of the precious truth that God is *our* Father rests back upon His eternal Fatherhood. And then there is Sonship in the Godhead. There is that relation, at once of dependence and co-operation, which belongs to the son who is in the closest intimacy with his father. We get a glimpse into the eternal fact through the revelation which has been made in time. The Son is the recipient of the divine plan; he is the Logos, the Divine Reason, in whom the ideas of God are mirrored. As the Son he is the Creator; the Father makes the world through him. In the person of the Christ he comes to us as the Revealer and the Saviour. Only the Son can reveal the Father, for he alone knoweth the Father. Only the Son can redeem the fallen race, for he alone can bring the Father's love and redeeming grace to us. The Holy Spirit completes the Trinity. He is the personal Life and Energy of God. He is the meeting-point of the Fatherhood and Sonship, dependent upon both, yet freely co-operative with both. He completes the circle of love and fellowship and knowledge; in him the full tide of the divine life is carried back to its source. The most complete analogy of the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Deity is found in the relation of the human spirit to the man himself. "For who among men," says Paul, "knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 11). Our power of self-knowledge, that inner sense by which we turn back the light of our consciousness upon the

powers and operations of the soul, by which we know ourselves at once as subject and object, as personality and thought, gives us an imperfect yet true idea of the divine Spirit. But the office of the Spirit can be best understood through His workings in the world. Whenever God comes into direct contact with the creature, it is through the Spirit. The presence of the divine energy and life in the new-created universe is described as the "brooding of the Spirit upon the face of the waters" (Gen. i. 2). The omnipresence of God in nature is through the Spirit. He is the source of physical energy, and of the life of vegetable and animal. He is the life of the human spirit. Through Him God dwells in every soul. It is the workings of the Spirit which the Pantheist perceives when he discovers his universal, infinite Substance under the shifting forms of the phenomenal world. The unknown Power of the Agnostic is the omnipresent Spirit. In the work of redemption the Spirit brings to men the knowledge and power of God. He dwells in prophets and holy men to inspire them for the parts they have to play in the kingdom of God. He brings to men the redemptive grace of the Father and the exalted Christ. It is His work to touch the sinner's heart, to effect the new birth, to dwell in the Christian as the Spirit of holiness, to make intercession for him in his prayers to God, to be his constant Guide and inward Monitor. He is the present and uniting power of God in the Christian church.

Such is the God whom we worship, the God of infinite Love, Three in One, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

IV. It remains to speak of the reasonableness of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. This is called in question by all the opponents of the Orthodox faith, and too often Trinitarians themselves so far justify them in their position as to assert that the doctrine cannot be defended upon rational grounds, but is to be received simply upon

the authority of revelation. Now, there is undoubtedly an element of incomprehensibility or mystery in this doctrine. But this is due to the fact that it is a doctrine of God, not that it is the doctrine of the triunity of God. From the nature of the case the Infinite must be beyond our comprehension. We can only know Him in part, through finite analogies and forms. It is enough if we have some true knowledge of Him. We can never expect to grasp in our little thought the infinite reality. If our doctrine of God is to be rejected because there is in it an element of mystery or incomprehensibility, then Orthodox and Unitarians alike might as well surrender at once to the Agnostics. But while admitting the mystery which belongs to our doctrine, in common with every other attempt to describe the Infinite Being, we deny that this mystery attaches exclusively, or even particularly, to the conception of Him as Three in One. Nay, rather, although we readily confess that we should never have come to the knowledge of the Triune God without the aid of revelation, we affirm that, having thus obtained this knowledge, we have the highest grounds in reason for maintaining it.

In the first place, there is no *a priori* objection to the doctrine. God stands alone. He is not a member of a class, with the other members of which we can compare Him. We can know Him only as He makes Himself known, and there is no more reason in the nature of things why He should be a Unity than why He should be a Trinity. Facts must decide who and what He is. It is, indeed, declared that God cannot be at the same time One and Three, because it is a mathematical impossibility. The objection has been urged by generations of grave Unitarians, who, perhaps, have really thought they have refuted Orthodoxy in this cheap and easy way. But it is difficult to see how they could have been in earnest. A mathematical absurdity might have been accepted during the

Middle Ages alongside of the doctrine of transubstantiation. But the greatest intellects of the centuries since the Reformation have not given themselves to any such foolishness. The slightest examination of the doctrine is sufficient to show that God is not held to be One in the same sense in which He is Three. Moreover, the analogies of finite things all go to show the absurdity of the objection. Everywhere in nature unity coexists with plurality. Science has not yet succeeded, and probably never will succeed, in getting rid of the duality of mass and energy which exists in the unity of matter. Unity in plurality is the distinctive mark of all organic life, from the lowest vegetable to the highest animal. The unity of the human soul exists only in conjunction with a plurality of faculties. In truth, if God is a bare unit, He is the only one of which we have any knowledge. If we are to know God at all, it can be only through His resemblances to finite things, but here the analogies are all against the Unitarian view. So far as the coexistence of unity with plurality in the Deity is concerned, reason certainly favors the Trinitarian doctrine.

Again, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity shows its reasonableness when viewed in relation to the ethnic religions. Natural theology, under the perverting influence of human sin, has resulted in false faiths. But we may learn something of the truth from the very distortions to which it has been subjected. We cannot suppose that there are no elements of reality in the heathen theologies. Now heathenism has vibrated constantly between two conceptions of the Deity. The one is polytheism. The Godhead is divided into a multiplicity of gods, yet with a vague idea, more or less clearly expressed, of an underlying unity. The other heathen conception of God is the pantheistic. The Deity has been confounded with the world. Here the divine unity is emphasized, though with a recognition, more or less distinct, of a plurality—none

the less real and significant because it is a plurality of manifestation rather than of essence. Now there is an element of truth in each of these views. The error, like most human errors, is itself a distorted truth. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity gives the full truth after which heathenism has been blindly groping, the Unity in Plurality, the Triune God. (See some interesting remarks on this point in Hodge's "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," p. 129 seq.). The bare monotheism which the Unitarian maintains has no place in the ethnic religions. It is to be found only in the Judaism of the synagogue and Mohammedanism, both of which are perversions of the religion of the Old Testament (Delitzsch, "Christliche Apologetik," p. 263 seq.). Nor will it ever meet the spiritual needs of men. The heart of humanity cries out after the living God. Christian missions, in the glorious work of rescuing the heathen and bringing them into the kingdom of God, must come to benighted souls with the Gospel of a Triune God and an incarnate Saviour.

Once more, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity manifests its reasonableness upon philosophical grounds. The great question of speculative philosophy concerns the nature of the Ground and Cause of all things. Is it matter or is it Spirit? is it impersonal or personal? Materialism, pantheism, agnosticism, deism, theism, are the different answers which the philosophies give to these questions. Here, too, as in the ethnic religions, we may find in each view an element of truth, unless, indeed, we except the bare materialism which reduces everything to matter and physical energy, turning the lowest of the second causes into the only cause. Now what philosophy needs is a conception of the First Cause, which will unite all these elements of truth—the incomprehensibility of God which agnosticism teaches, the immanence of God in the world which pantheism teaches, the transcendence of God which

is the distinctive characteristic of deism, and the personality of God which is the especial glory of theism. How can this need be supplied? The only answer is, By the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. It teaches, first of all, with the profoundest emphasis and deepest insight, the personality of God. It points to a God who is wholly distinct from the world, capable of existing with no world, its Creator and Governor. It finds an especial expression of the truth of the divine transcendence in its doctrine of the Father. But it declares with equal emphasis that God is immanent in nature and in man. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit represents the truth of pantheism. The infinite Power that is everywhere present, the reality of which the energy and life of nature are the manifestation, is the Spirit of God. He is the substratum of the human spirit, the light of our intellectual seeing, the source of all that is pure and holy in us. Moreover, by the incarnation God has become immanent in the world in a peculiar and wondrous way for our redemption. The Word has become flesh, the Father has come to us through the Son. And then, the doctrine of the Trinity leaves untouched the mystery and incomprehensibility of the Deity, which agnosticism asserts. It discloses to us but a glimpse of the divine nature, leaving us on the shores of the Godhead, while the infinite ocean rolls far out beyond the utmost verge of our horizon. The personality of God can be defended with full philosophical force only by the help of the doctrine of the Trinity. How is self-consciousness possible in God? In man it is developed by an experience in which the world and our fellow-men are indispensable factors. I cannot know that I am I, until I have distinguished myself from the not-I, from the universe of matter and spirit about me. Self-consciousness involves three factors. I must know myself as subject, I must know myself as object, I must know that subject and object are one. Now this cannot be without the aid of the not-self, the ex-

ternal world. No world, no personality. Now how is self-consciousness possible in God? The question is not a foolish one. A very large number of the acutest philosophers in all ages have not only asked it but have declared that it could only be answered in one way. They have said that God must have a world in order to attain to self-consciousness and personality. This is the stronghold of pantheism, with its eternal world, as the eternal ground of self-consciousness in God. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is the one foe which this view cannot withstand. If God is eternally Three in One, then all that is necessary for self-consciousness and personality is eternally present and active in God. He needs no world through which to come to self-consciousness. He might create no world, and still He would be the eternally personal God.

Finally, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity manifests its reasonableness upon grounds of Christian experience. This is the strongest and only certain proof of the doctrine. The Christian in his life of faith and love knows the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each of the Three has been concerned in the beginnings and the progress of his religious experience. In prayer, in service, in all the exercises and circumstances of his Christian life he has had that knowledge of the Triune God which is eternal life. The great fact is as open to the natural man as to the spiritual man, but it can be perceived and understood only by him who opens his whole being to receive the things unseen and eternal. It has been truly said, "He who has not felt the drawing of the Father to the Son, and cannot say, 'Not I live, but Christ liveth in me,' and has not heard within the unutterable groanings of the Holy Spirit, he from the nature of the case will neither know nor wish to know the Trinity of God" (Delitzsch, "Apologetik," p. 275). If we desire to know the truth of this doctrine, let us try the method of experience. The poet Whittier, in his verses entitled "Trinitas," tells how

he tried to solve the problem of the Trinity by intellectual methods :

“At morn I prayed, ‘I fain would see
How Three are One, and One is Three :
Read the dark riddle unto me.’”

He sought the answer in the writings of the theologians :

“That night with painful care I read,
What Hippo’s saint and Calvin said,
The living seeking to the dead !
“In vain I turned, in weary quest,
Old pages, where (God give them rest !)
The poor creed-mongers dreamed and guessed.”

It was in vain. But he had been out that day in the world. He had felt the presence of God in nature and seen His wisdom and His love. He had seen a pure woman come with helping words and deeds to a fallen sister. A voice in his own soul had spoken of hope and salvation for such lost sinners. So while he still prayed came the answer :

“Then something whispered, ‘Dost thou pray
For what thou hast ? This very day
The holy Three have crossed thy way.’”

“‘The equal Father in rain and sun,
His Christ in the good to evil done,
His voice in thy soul ;—and the Three are One.’”

And so it must be to us all. Reason may give us strong grounds, apart from experience, of the wonderful truth. But the truth itself will dawn in its full-orbed beauty only upon the soul that sees the Triune Lord Himself with the eye of faith. To such an one the Trinity is no more a hard doctrine, a formula which is to be accepted because it belongs to the creed of Orthodoxy ; it is the living fact which gives life and the world their meaning.

XII.

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF GOD.

WE have come to the point where we need to consider the moral character of God. It is a subject of untold importance in theology, and until we come to clear views respecting it we cannot take a single step forward. Most, if not all, the errors in divinity have arisen from false or confused notions of the divine character. We cannot rest satisfied here with the highest conceptions of natural theology. It is just in the doctrine of God's moral attributes that the natural revelation is most defective. In a world of sin we need a higher revelation. It is not merely that there are facts in nature and human society which we cannot reconcile with God's infinite perfections; we lack the subjective basis for the perception of His moral and spiritual character. The true image of God in men is blurred. Our Saviour states the law of spiritual knowledge, when he says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. v. 8). But we are impure. Hence the need of the redemptive revelation. And we have now to ask, What is the character of the God whom this redemptive revelation makes known to us? Especially we need to know how He has been revealed to us in the person and teachings of Jesus Christ.

"And one cried to another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts" (Is. vi. 3). "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John iv. 8). These two passages express what is distinctive in the Christian conception of God. He is holy and He is love. Or, more

briefly, we may say, *He is holy love* (Luthardt, "Kompendium der Dogmatik," 7te Aufl., p. 92 seq.). This is the truth which I wish to explain and apply in the present chapter.

I. Holiness and love are not different attributes of God, but the same attributes seen under different aspects. As Professor Henry B. Smith says, "The divine love is taken most truly as equivalent to the divine holiness" ("System of Christian Theology," p. 37). Holiness may be called the *formal* aspect of God's character. It brings to view the moral perfection of God, His separation from all that is in the slightest degree sinful or evil. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John i. 5). It is the perfect purity, the absolute goodness of God.

But at the best there is something negative about this conception of God. Holiness tells us *that* there is such a thing as moral perfection, but not *what* it is. It gives us the form, but not the contents of the fact we are seeking. In what does this absolute goodness which we call holiness consist? The answer is, that it consists in love. Love gives us the *material* or essential principle of God's moral nature. Our previous discussions have familiarized us with the definition of love. It is self-bestowal, self-communication. The being who loves finds his own highest good in the good of others. I do not say that he finds his own highest happiness in the happiness of others. This is true, but it is not the whole truth, and it is a truth which at most finds only a partial realization in a world of sin. The highest good here spoken of is the highest well-being, which is primarily moral good and only secondarily happiness. Love may be known through its opposite, selfishness. Selfishness is self-seeking, the making one's own happiness the chief end. Its principle is isolation. But love looks away from self, it seeks to give rather than to receive. Its principle is sacrifice, by which I mean not necessarily privation or pain, but the

bestowal of one's best on others.) Suffering may become an element in sacrifice when it is exercised in a world of sin, but even then it is incidental, rather than essential, to it. God's love may be the bliss, unalloyed by suffering, of His eternal being as the blessed Trinity. It may be the happy bestowal of His perfections upon the pure spirits in heaven. It may be the love that takes upon itself suffering and privation for the redemption of a fallen race. But in every case it is sacrifice, the free giving of self to others. He is no God wrapped up in the isolation of a selfish concern for His own happiness. If He were, He would no longer be the holy God, for such selfishness is the very essence of sin. It is His nature to go out from Himself, to communicate Himself and His blessedness to others. The Bible tells us, indeed, that the chief end of God is His own glory; but it also tells us that His highest glory is realized in redemption, and that His chief end is the establishment of His kingdom, which is a kingdom of love and grace.

II. The Bible in all its parts teaches that God is holy love. This is what distinguishes it from every other religious book. With different emphasis in different stages of the redemptive revelation, but everywhere with clear recognition of their essentiality, the two aspects of the divine perfection, the holiness and the love, are consistently asserted.

The Old Testament gives greater prominence to the formal aspect, the holiness of God. It is easy to see why this was the case. The Israelites were surrounded by heathen nations who were addicted to the most degrading kinds of idolatry. The conceptions of God current among these idolaters were low and unworthy. Sinful men attributed to their deities all their own worst passions and vices. Heathenism, even in its highest forms, did not hesitate to ascribe moral evil to God. Or if in the dualistic religions it was able partially to avoid this

error, it was only by dividing the sway of the world between two principles, the one of good and the other of evil, and leaving it uncertain which has the upper hand. The gods of Greece, according to the representations of their own votaries, broke every commandment of the Decalogue. They were murderers, liars, adulterers, revengeful, cruel. The most unblushing licentiousness was practised at the shrines of many of their deities, under their supposed sanction. The worship of Moloch, with its slaughter of innocent children, throws a lurid light upon the idolatry of Palestine. Now the great lesson God had to teach Israel was, that He is *holy*. This is the key-note of the Old Testament. It is struck at the very beginning of the redemptive revelation. The utter and irreconcilable difference between Jehovah and the so-called gods of the heathen lay in the fact that He was a Being of perfect goodness, while they were unholy and evil. Abraham gives his confession of faith when he asks, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25). Only a divine revelation could have given him such a conception of God as that. The Hebrew word which is translated holy points to God as separated from all that is sinful and unclean. The existence of Israel as the Chosen People was based upon the holiness of God—"And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine" (Lev. xx. 26). "Be ye holy; for I am the Lord your God" (Lev. xx. 7). The Law was intended not only to teach the Israelites how to become holy, but to impress upon their minds the holiness of God. All the institutions of the Jewish Theocracy were intended to emphasize this great truth. The Tabernacle and the Temple, with their elaborate ceremonial, the consecration of the priests, the anointing of the kings, the call and inspiration of the prophets, all turned the thoughts of the pious Israelite to the glorious

holiness of his God. The divine dealings with Israel in the long course of the sacred history tended to the same end. The two strains which constantly sound forth from the prophetic message, redemption and judgment, tell of God's perfect goodness and His unconquerable aversion to all sin. And out of the divine holiness flowed the faithfulness, the truth, and the justice of God.

But while God's holiness is emphasized in the Old Testament, the material aspect of the divine perfection is not ignored. It could not be, for love is essential to redemption, and redemption is the great theme of the earlier, as of the later, revelation. The choice of Israel as God's peculiar people and all His dealings with them in the long course of their history were the outcome of love. "The Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day" (Dent. x. 15). "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion" (Ps. lxxxvii. 2). God is the Father of Israel (Dent. xxxii. 6, 19; Jer. xxxi. 9, 20). The true Israelite recognized in all God's relations to His people the constant evidences of His love. Nevertheless, the holiness was more manifest. There was a narrowness about the Old Testament standpoint which prevented the full revelation of the divine love. Love is something that cannot be made known by merely talking about it. It must be experienced to be understood. It was present in God's heart and redemptive work from the first, but it could only gradually be brought into the sphere of human life, so that men could see it for what it was. At the most the Old Testament dispensation of God's kingdom was confined to Israel. The pious Israelite was impressed with the idea of God's love to his nation rather than to himself as an individual, and the thought of a universal love, extending to all nations and to every individual of the human race, was too great for him. It is only in the predictions of the coming dispensation and the spiritual

kingdom of God, that we discover anticipations of the great truth, or rather I may say, the great fact, which was to transform the world. The prophets, standing on the mountain height of inspiration, see on the far horizon of the future the new covenant, with its divine forgiveness and the divine love and Fatherhood for all mankind.

When we pass from the Old Testament to the New we come into an entirely new sphere of revelation. The element of holiness no longer receives the stronger emphasis. This is laid upon the love of God. The holiness is not ignored. It is as constantly and consistently asserted as in the Old Testament. It is everywhere taken for granted. Christ and the Apostles uphold with unvarying earnestness the absolute moral perfection of God. There is One good, that is, God. One jot or one tittle shall in nowise depart from the law until all be fulfilled. The faithfulness, the truth, the justice of the divine character are taught in the same terms, and often with stronger emphasis, than in the earlier revelation. Nevertheless, the chief stress is laid upon the love of God. Men were now to be taught in what the holiness of God consisted, and to understand that it was love. This was possible now, because the divine love had actually come in all its fulness into the sphere of human life. God had given the supreme proof of His love in the gift of His Son. It was not to be a mere matter of words, but the *fact* was to be made manifest. In the person of the Saviour the divine love entered the world. He was, as we have seen, the eternal object of the love of God in the mystery of the blessed Trinity. Now that God's love was turned manward, he came, bringing to man, for the redemption of the race, the whole love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus was the personal, visible love of God. He showed men the Father. All his acts and all his words bore the stamp of love upon them. His death upon the cross gave mankind an idea of unselfish sacrifice which

showed itself by its greatness and depth to be divine. He taught men how to love, revealing to them the beauty, the blessedness, the holiness of self-sacrifice. He made them know the truth of what at first seems a paradox, that whoso will save his life shall lose it, and whoso will lose his life for Christ's sake shall find it. He revealed to them the truth that greatness consists in service, since even God has shown His highest glory by stooping to mankind and enduring suffering, shame, and death in the person of the Christ. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28).

The Saviour's teachings concerning the love of God found especial and striking expression in his doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. Only the eternal Son knew the Father (Matt. xi. 27; John i. 18), and now he had come to make known to men the blessed fact that the eternal God is the Father of men. All the tender relations which subsist between earthly parents and their children are illustrative of the relations in which the Almighty stands toward sinful humanity. Christ taught men to see even in the ordinary operations of the divine providence the evidences of God's fatherly love. But still more in the operations of His grace. "When ye pray, say, Our Father;" "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke xi. 2, 13).

What Christ teaches with so much earnestness, his disciples proclaim with equal emphasis after his ascension. The Spirit of the risen Christ continues to utter through his inspired followers the message of love and of the divine Fatherhood. Upon it all their teaching was based. This was what rendered their preaching a Gospel—a message of good tidings.

Several facts impress themselves with especial force

upon us as we examine this New Testament revelation of the divine character. First among these is the universality of the love of God. The distinctive mark of the Old Dispensation is its particularism; that of the New is its catholicity. God's method of election, according to which a single people was chosen and educated to be the bearer of His redemption to mankind, made it impossible that the breadth of the divine grace should be revealed at first. It was always a fact, but men did not know it as such. But the New Dispensation was universal. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son" (John iii. 16)—not Israel, not certain individuals in the race, but all mankind. All the barriers that existed between men were broken down by the assertion of this great fact. Henceforth there was neither Greek nor Jew, bond nor free. The Apostles went out preaching a Gospel for all men, a love of God as broad as mankind. God is the Father of all men; every man is His child. The redemption which Christ wrought out is for all. He said himself, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John xii. 32). His inspired disciples said, that he by the grace of God tasted death for every man (Heb. ii. 9), and that God "willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4). In making these statements, I am aware that the New Testament speaks especially of the love of God to those who by faith have become partakers of His grace, and that He is more commonly called the Father of such. This is what is to be expected, since the love of God can be made perfect only where it is accepted and returned by human love, and since the relation of fatherhood exists in its fulness only where the reciprocal relation of a genuine sonship has been established, a sonship that involves the free and joyous recognition of the divine Fatherhood. But most emphatically do I deny that the New Testament confines the divine love and Fa-

therhood exclusively to believers. Rather it represents them as universal, so far as God is concerned. The restriction is not His, but that of the sinful men who will not accept His love. The divine redemption which Christ has wrought is a redemption for the race. It is full and free. It is complete, and all men have to do is to accept it. Men may know it or be ignorant of it, but all the same God loves them and is their Father, and is bending over them in paternal longing for their good. It is their fault if they reject His love and turn love into holy wrath. The parable of the Prodigal Son is the story of God's relation to us. While the son is spending his substance in riotous living, and when he is feeding on the husks, the father is still his father, keeping a place for him in his heart and home, ready to welcome him with outstretched arms and the kiss of reconciliation when he returns (Luke xv. 11-32). The relation of fatherhood, which has from the first existed, is the basis of the reconciliation and restoration.

A second fact which impresses itself upon us in this connection is the undeservedness, so far as men are concerned, of this divine love. This is what gives it its character as redemptive love. No other religion has grasped this idea, and no other except this could, since no other is divine. If it is the nature of all love to give, God's love has discovered the true secret of giving. He bestows His favors on the unthankful and unworthy. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10). "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). This is where the conception of God as holiness falls so far behind that of Him as love. Mere holiness would suggest a dealing of God with men upon principles of mere justice, the *quid pro quo*. According to this idea of God's character men would get their deserts, no more and

no less. But love follows a very different principle. It utterly refuses to be limited by desert. The ill desert, the sin of men, is a call to a higher exhibition of grace. The love of God goes not where it is best deserved, but where it is most needed and where it will do the most good. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance (Luke xv. 7). "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." One of God's chief reasons for permitting sin to exist may have been that He might be able to manifest His grace as He could not otherwise.

Still another fact at which we must glance before we leave this branch of our subject is the purpose of the divine love. It is to produce love in men. Redemption is the restoration of love in men by means of the love of God. The Old Testament motive is, as we have seen, "Be ye holy, for I am holy;" the New Testament is, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John iv. 19), and "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (Ib. iv. 11). There is nothing like love to call forth love. There is a contagious power in it which nothing else has. Nothing will so evoke all latent germs of nobleness. Unless the heart is utterly obdurate it must yield at last to this gentle, persuasive, all-powerful influence. Here is the wonderful secret of God's method, so different from any method that man ever devised or could ever think of devising, for overcoming sin and restoring the soul to the beauty of holiness. No one except God could have devised it. It has that simplicity which belongs to truth and nature. It is like the law of gravitation in the physical sphere, bringing all things into unity. Compare it with our poor human devices for raising men out of their degradation by education, by culture, by reform. What do they amount to, unless they borrow something of God's method? What the light and heat of the sun are in the natural world—the source of all life and activity and

wholesomeness—the love of God is in the spiritual world. God is love. Those short words unlock the mysteries of the universe.

III. We are now ready to appreciate the importance of these facts in theology. It cannot be overestimated. For theology is the science of God and divine things; it views the creation only in its relation to God; it considers man in his divine connections as a being made by God and for God. Hence everything turns upon the conception of God which theology maintains. And it is not enough to have a correct conception of God in His physical and ontological attributes, or even to think rightly regarding His wisdom and His knowledge. We have to do exclusively with moral and spiritual subjects, and the question of questions for us to answer must be, What is the moral and spiritual nature of God? It seems strange that so little is made of this in our treatises on theology. Everything else has ample discussion, but this is neglected. And yet upon this everything depends.

We need to bear in mind that we are dealing here with facts. It is the living God with whom theology has to do, not with an abstraction of the intellect. The distinction between truths and facts, upon which every profound thinker since the days of Plato has laid such stress, needs to be jealously maintained. The question is not what views of God's moral character best express our highest ideals, but what is the actual moral character of God? Let us in theology have the courage of our convictions, if we have any. Let us believe that God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. It is the part of children, not of men, to play with puppets instead of realities. This universe is a very real thing, and our life in it is equally real. What is the nature of its Cause and Ground? Is the world the battle-field of moral forces which gain no settled victory, the good now triumphant and to-morrow defeated, in endless and hopeless ebb and

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flow? Or is there a dominance of evil, as the pessimist claims? Or is there a Being who is just, according to a certain low standard of justice, but without pity or love? Or is the regnant power, which extends to everything and embraces everything, that love which Christ came to earth to reveal, that holy love which seeks to restore mankind to perfect love? Is there a Fatherhood so comprehensive and minute that not a sparrow falls to the earth without its compassionate regard, and the very hairs of the humblest head are numbered? These are questions of untold importance. They have to do not with speculations but with facts. We may turn over in our thought month after month, and year after year, the ontological problems of the Trinity, or the interesting questions connected with the Kenosis of Christ, or the grave inquiries of eschatology. We may, after years of thought, be as far as ever from solving them, and yet we can lie down at night and sleep sweetly, though we be ignorant of their truth. Yea, we may lie down and die with them unsolved, waiting for that fuller knowledge which shall come when the partial shall be done away and we shall know even as we are known. But the question of God's moral character is one we cannot for a day leave unanswered. The sweetest sleep is embittered if we know not what is the nature of the God who rules us. Death is a terror if we are ignorant of the God into whose presence we are to be ushered.

X Now there is no excuse for ignorance on this subject, so far as those are concerned who have the Bible and have thus the opportunity to know God as He has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ His Son; yea, more, who have experienced in their own souls the forgiving grace of God in Christ and the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. It is not only their privilege but their duty to understand God as He is, and to make known the blessed truth to their fellow-men. And the theologian, above all others, as the professed teacher of the highest

truth, cannot neglect the fundamental facts of his sacred science. The theological system that begins in confused or false conceptions of God will end in a caricature of God.

The truth respecting God which Christian theology has to maintain is that which we have found in the Bible, namely, that He is holy love. Both factors in the one conception need to be carefully guarded. (God is not holiness without love nor love without holiness.) Our temptation, in discussing the great questions of theology, is to vibrate between the two extremes which these aspects of God's perfection present, when viewed apart from each other. We unduly emphasize the holiness or the love. We want the form at the expense of the contents, or the contents to the detriment of the form. We do not readily hold the two together in their inseparable unity. It is hard to say which error is the greater. Both have wrought incalculable mischief in theology.

We may not abridge the holiness of God. This is a temptation to which we are constantly subject. Because we are sinners, we find it difficult to conceive of an absolutely holy Being. We think that God is altogether such an one as ourselves (Ps. l. 21). Or even, if we believe in the abstract that He is holy, we attribute to Him dispositions and acts which are morally indefensible. Thus we think of Him as an easy-going, merely benevolent Being, to whom sin is a comparatively small matter, who lets men go on pretty much as they please, and is ready always upon evidence of sorrow for the past to forgive and forget. The effect upon our theology is disastrous. Instead of being the Governor and Controller of His universe, moral as well as material, He becomes in our thought a *Roi fainéant*, an inefficient Sovereign, who looks idly on while His subjects get the upper hand and is too kind to interfere. The result is a low view of sin. (Unless God is absolutely holy, sin is not absolutely evil;) it is infirmity rather than sin, a necessary incident of hu-

man growth, an indication of our finiteness rather than our guilt. When our conception of sin has become thus attenuated, redemption loses its significance. For what is the pressing necessity of deliverance if sin is only a relative evil and God views it with indulgence? What men need, if this be the true view, is not redemption but training, not deliverance but culture. Accordingly, the death of Christ, instead of being a moral necessity, without which God could not be at once just and the sinner's Justifier; instead of being an actual making good and reparation for human sin; instead of removing the obstacles in the divine holiness to the forgiveness of sin; in a word, instead of being an atonement in the only true sense of the term—the death of Christ, I say, becomes merely a manifestation of the divine love to mankind, necessary only in so far as it affords the highest evidence of God's willingness to forgive—a matter, in fine, of relative rather than absolute necessity. The atonement undervalued, the question arises as to whether the incarnation was necessary, or even whether it is reasonable to suppose that God actually became man. (The incline, down which one so easily glides into Arianism and Humanitarianism is perilously near.) Moreover, the other distinctive doctrines of the Christian system are, each in its own way, affected. (Regeneration becomes reformation.) Faith becomes an intellectual acceptance of doctrines about God.) The Christian life loses those high motives which arise from the recognition of the kingdom of God, viewed as a kingdom of redemption, as the great end of Christian striving. Finally, those stern words which Christ spoke respecting the destiny of the ungodly, and which the loyal and single-minded Christian accepts because he believes that the Saviour who has taught him all things best worth knowing understands this hard subject better than he, are explained away, and a universalism, which Christ carefully refrained from teaching, substituted for them.

Let me not be misunderstood in what has just been said. I do not mean to assert that all who hold inadequate views of the holiness of God fall into these errors. I am only showing to what such views lead when carried out to their legitimate consequences. Moreover, where they are not thus carried out, they exist as a tendency which works disastrously in theology and the Christian life. We need to maintain with unyielding firmness the scriptural doctrine of the absolute moral perfection, the holiness, of God. We must often go back to Sinai and learn anew the truth Jehovah taught the Chosen People amid the thunderings and lightnings of the desert mountain. } Otherwise we can never rightly estimate nor truly teach the meaning of Calvary.

But it is equally important that we should not abridge the love of God. This is a temptation which is experienced in all ages of the Christian church, and which has especially assailed those who hold high but narrow views of the divine holiness. The two great men who have done so much to shape the theology of Christendom, Augustin and Calvin—men whose names should never be mentioned without reverence and who have been most reviled by those who have known them the least—have not escaped this error. We have seen that the Old Testament revelation of God, in which the chief emphasis was laid upon His holiness, had a certain narrowness about it which was incidental to the stage of development of God's kingdom to which it belonged. So far as it contained a doctrine of the divine love, it was presented in the form of particularism. It was the love of God to Israel, and not to the world. Now there are many theologians who find it hard to advance beyond the Old Testament standpoint. Although God has proclaimed His love to mankind and revealed Himself as the universal Father, although He has freely offered the finished redemption of Christ to all who will accept it, they still teach a particularism which nar-

rows the largeness and freeness of the Gospel. I am not anxious to dwell upon the extreme form in which this view has been taught, according to which God bestows upon only a part of the race the opportunity to embrace the salvation wrought out by Christ, while the rest are condemned to everlasting punishment on account of Adam's sin—a sin, whose guilt may be enhanced by their personal transgressions, but from whose baleful consequences they have no power to extricate themselves. This scheme of doctrine is not held so widely as it once was, and where it is held, it is rendered practically innocuous by the qualifications and concessions made by its advocates. Doubtless these concessions involve more or less of inconsistency; but, as Neander says, when criticising Augustin for breaking the iron chain of his system by admitting the freedom of Adam's will in the first transgression, this is a “noble inconsistency, which grew out of the victory of the religious, moral feeling over the logical and speculative tendency of his intellect” (Torrey's “Neander,” vol. ii., p. 685). There is, however, a widely prevalent view of God's character, of which I wish to speak. It does not, like that just mentioned, go to the extreme of shutting off a portion of the race from the opportunity of salvation, but it nevertheless unduly restricts the divine love. According to this view, every human being begins his earthly career under the frown of God, a child of wrath. Not only is he estranged from God but God is estranged from him. God is His creative Father, that is, God has called him into existence and bestows upon him the common blessings of His providence—causing His sun to rise upon him and His rain to fall upon him—but God is not his moral and spiritual Father. God does not love him, in any but that general and common benevolence which is bestowed upon all His creatures. The sinner enters into God's love only when his sins are forgiven and he is born by regeneration into the kingdom. Then for the first time God becomes his

Father in the spiritual sense of the term. Then for the first time he has the right to say the Lord's Prayer. Then he comes for the first time into relation to the grace of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Now I know that there is an element of truth in this view. It is true that the sinner by his sin separates himself from God and draws upon himself the divine displeasure. It is true that so long as he continues in his sin he can lay no claim upon the divine love. He has no right, except as God gives him the right, even to say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight!" Love for its full exercise requires the action of both parties. Fatherhood cannot manifest itself in its complete depth and tenderness, unless there is an answering spirit of sonship. Moreover, it is true that it is possible for God's child, made in His image, blessed by His love, to so tear himself away from God and alienate himself from Him, that God finds it a moral necessity to turn from him, and to leave him to the consequences of his sin. The love of God in its relation to the finally and irremediably obdurate becomes a displeasure, yea, even a holy wrath, which finds expression in punishment, and which we hesitate whether to call love at all—though it seems to me that we ought to regard it as still love, though thus changed. But when every element of truth in this theory is conceded, I cannot but think that in its main positions it is unscriptural and therefore erroneous. God's love is not so narrow and grudging as this. His Fatherhood is not confined to a part of mankind. Through Christ He has made provision for the redemption of all mankind. His love made the world and brought the race into being. His love has attended mankind in all the long history since the creation. His love first gives us our individual being. We are born into His love. The infant who enters this sinful world, with the disadvantage of the tendencies to sin it has inherited from its ancestors, is enfolded from its first breath

in the Father's love. Christ gave his estimate of God's relation to children when he said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," and "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xix. 14, xviii. 10). When the infant comes to the age of responsibility and goes astray, as every child of man does, led by the temptation of the world without and the evil tendencies within, God's paternal love still follows it. Even where the prodigal goes into the far country the Father's love goes with him. God longs and yearns and labors to bring back His child to Himself. He speaks through His providence, through His Spirit, by the mouth of preachers and parents and friends. All life long He follows His child, and will not let him go while there is any hope. (And at the last, if God's love has been stubbornly refused and there is no more that divine mercy and compassion can do, the damning guilt which calls for punishment is not the guilt of Adam, not the infirmity or the inevitable sin, if there be such, of the man, nor even the great and inexcusable individual sins, but the great crowning guilt of rejecting this persistent love of God.) We can see enough to be sure that this is the case with those who are brought up in Christian lands and hear the Gospel of God's grace. We have faith to believe that it is so in the case of the heathen. There is no man, however remote, however ignorant, however insignificant in human estimation, to whom God is not a Father and who is not all his life long surrounded by the divine love. The love of God is like the air of heaven ; it belongs to all men. It is theirs whether they know it or not. God is as much the Father of the Hindoo or the Chinaman as your Father or mine. The poor degraded black man of the Congo, though he knows it not, lives and moves and has his being in the divine love. Indeed, God must love him in some respects more than He does us. It is the nature of love in men to bestow itself where there is most need. How

dare we think that God's love is less compassionate than ours? He is not going to take advantage of the heathen's ignorance to make him suffer a heavier punishment in the other world, but will make it more tolerable for him at the day of judgment because of this very ignorance.

Where such a view of God's character is held, the Christian's work in the world will be cheerful and hopeful. His theology will be full of God's own light. A world that originated in God's love and is going onward in God's love and moving steadily toward the consummation of God's love, must be a good world, in spite of all that, for the time being, looks dark and perplexing. If theology is ever to be a power in the world, it must accept this view of God and be penetrated through and through with its influence. In the ancient church, John, the Apostle of love, who pierced farthest into the depths of the Saviour's Gospel, was called "the theologian;" he had found the secret of the science of God when he taught that "God is love." The words of the poet Gambold, which Erskine of Linlathen loved to quote, impress the same truth:

"I'm apt to think the man
That could surround the sum of things, and spy
The heart of God, and secrets of His Empire,
Would speak but love—with him the bright result
Would change the hue of intermediate scenes
And make one thing of all theology."

God is holiness. God is love. Such is the Bible doctrine of the divine character. It is easy to say it. It is not so easy to accept it and apply it. It is a truth men learn better in their closets on their knees than in books, better in active work for Christ and God than in the theologian's lecture-room. Slowly—very slowly—the world and the church are learning to know the holy love of God. And just as fast as it is known, the world is becoming a new world. When it is fully known redemption will be complete.

XIII.

THE PLAN OF GOD.

THE subject upon which I am now to speak affords a beautiful illustration of the fact that true thinkers in all departments of human investigation meet and agree in the highest truth. Genuine science, following the indications of reason and design in the world, is led back by sure and undeviating steps to a primal purpose, out of which all the varied forms of the universe have come. The philosophy which, undeceived by the false lights of pantheism, agnosticism, and materialism, seeks to interpret the universe by what is highest in it and not by what is lowest, finds satisfaction only in an eternal Reason, of whose conscious purpose finite things are the expression. Christian theology, drawing its inspiration alike from the natural and the redemptive revelations, is borne upward to the truth of God's eternal plan. Men as different in their modes of thought, and the times in which they lived as Augustin, Plato, and Agassiz are here on common ground.

The doctrine of the divine plan belongs, however, in a peculiar sense to theology. It is a postulate of science and philosophy; it is a revealed mystery of theology, which not only teaches the fact but discloses its inmost meaning. Revelation enables us to take the daring flight into the timeless thought of God, and from this transcendent height to view the whole course of things in time—creation, providence, redemption, God's work, nature's ongoings, man's history.

It is a test of the mettle of a theologian, or indeed of

any thoughtful Christian, whether he is willing to ascend to the height of the divine plan. Weaklings soon grow faint and are glad to return to the level plain where everything is smooth and easy. But strong men are made stronger by the ascent and the glorious prospect which rewards it. They come down out of the Mount, as Moses did, with their faces aglow with the light of God, and all sublunary things henceforth look differently to them, being suffused with a new and divine meaning. It is the fashion in these days to speak slightly of Calvinism. I do not mean to go out of my way to defend it. But this I do say, that to Calvinism, above all other religious systems, belongs the credit of having dared to deal honestly and bravely with the plan of God. It has faced truth at its highest point and has not allowed itself to be frightened away by difficulties. Herein has lain its strength. This is what has drawn strong thinkers toward it and made it the nurse of strong thinkers and strong Christians. I grant that Calvinism has been so absorbed in the thought of God's sovereignty that it has often forgotten His love, and has failed to recognize the freedom of the human will. But let us not, while correcting its defects, turn from the sources of its power. The faults of our age lie in the opposite direction. We need more iron in our blood. We need the vigor of the Alpine air.

I. We will look first at the nature of the divine plan.

It originated in the holy love of the Triune God. God was indeed complete in Himself; love, joy, and life found their full satisfaction in the inner relations and experiences of the Trinity. Nevertheless, it is the nature of love to give. God would not remain shut up in the blessedness of His own internal life. He determined to surround Himself with created beings, to whom He might manifest His glory and communicate His perfections. He was full, teeming with all holy and blessed things, and

He desired to have those about Him who would share His riches. The Bible often represents God's motive in resolving to create as His own glory. This appears at first sight to be a selfish reason. But that is not the meaning of the Scriptures. The glory of God which is spoken of, His declarative glory, as the theologians call it, consists in the manifestation of His perfections and the communication of them to His creatures (Edwards's "Chief End of God in Creation," Works, vol. iii., p. 81 seq.). The noble impulse which leads the artist or the poet to give expression to their ideals in painting or verse, in order that others may share in the fulness of their genius, is akin to God's motive when He seeks His glory (Smith, "System of Christian Theology," p. 136 seq.). God's glory is the manifestation of His love.

The goal of the divine plan, the great end at which it aimed, was the establishment of God's kingdom or redemption. To this all else was subordinate. This was what gave unity to its infinite diversity. The material universe was to be the theatre of this great work, intelligent beings the actors in it; its history was to run through the ages, the God-man was to be its author and finisher. I know that in thus stating the end of the divine plan I have implied the existence of sin as an essential element in it, for of course there could be no redemption if there were no sin. But it seems to me that the New Testament requires this. It never represents God as contemplating the existence of a universe without sin. We shall discuss the relation of the divine plan to sin farther on. It is enough here to say that the universe which took shape in the eternal thought of God was one in which sin was to abound while grace should yet more abound. There were to be intelligent beings who should never sin, and realms into which sin should never enter, and they were dear to God and had their important place in His purpose. But the interest of God's plan centered in the

drama of redemption, the establishment of the kingdom of God in a world of sin. To this the rest was subsidiary. The angels who should never sin were to be "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. i. 14).

Accordingly, the plan stood in an especial connection with Christ. He was the eternal Logos, who represents in a particular sense the reason of the Deity. And so it was in him that the plan was formed. God beheld the universe that was to be and all the process of redemption, mirrored in the Word, who was to be the Mediator, Creator, and Revealer. Moreover, the God-man was the central fact in the plan. His incarnation and redemptive work formed its very core. Christ and redemption were facts inwrought in the very substance of the creation. All things were created by Christ and for him (Col. i. 16). Bethlehem and Calvary shone like brilliant lights in the eternal purpose of God.

I have spoken of the unity of the divine plan. It is hard for human thought to grasp it. We form our plans in broken and piecemeal fashion, a part to-day, the rest to-morrow. We set our end before us, and then painfully and slowly work out the methods and decide upon the means by which we shall attain it. But not so, God. His thought is intuitive and perfect. His plan is complete from the first. We conceive of it as consisting of separate decrees, successively determined upon. But this is our infirmity of thought. There is only one decree, though it consists of many parts or members. These parts have no order or succession of time. Logically one may come before another, but not temporally.

The eternal plan is all-comprehensive. It extends to everything, even the most minute. It is a sign of our imperfection as finite beings that we grasp so few things in our thought. The general, like Alexander or Napoleon, who carries in his mind the plan of a campaign in its mul-

titude of details, is regarded as a genius. But God is infinite; He is omniscient and omnipotent. Nothing is too great for Him and nothing is too small. His plan, like His providence, was universal. The great General did not let slip one detail of the great campaign against sin which was to be fought out in His universe. The world He was going to create was one in which not a sparrow should fall without His notice, and all things should work together for good to the lovers of God. All things were to be subsidiary in one way or another to redemption and nothing was neglected, because nothing was unimportant. The rain-drop on my window, the battle of Waterloo, the death of Christ, all had their place in that perfect plan. The laws and operations of nature, the events of history, the good and bad acts of individual men were included in it. There were to be no surprises to God, nothing for which He had not provided. He was from the first to have the reins in His hands and guide the universe to its appointed goal. The Westminster Catechism does not put the fact too strongly when it says that God "hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

Again, God's plan is unchangeable. We find our plans imperfect or unmanageable and alter them to suit our purposes. But God's plan was perfect from the first and needed not to be changed. He did not make a new plan when Adam fell; redemption was a part of the first plan. God has no afterthoughts. In the infirmity of our finite minds we speak as if He had, but this is not the fact. When the Bible speaks of God as repenting, as refraining from threatened punishment, as altering His methods of dealing with mankind, it views His actions not from the standpoint of eternity but of time. There is change in His providence but not in His decree. It is change to us, not change to Him. The change itself was a part of the one eternal plan. God always meant to change, and by this changing in time He upholds the immutability of His

decree. The free acts of men, which seem to make God alter His purposes, were themselves included in the eternal purpose.

Once more, the plan of God is free. He did not form it from any necessity, unless it be the necessity of love which is the highest freedom. He might have formed no plan, content to dwell forever in the blessedness of His own Triune life. He might have formed an entirely different plan. When His purpose was formed there was no being but Himself in existence. All possibilities were before His infinite mind. He knew all that might be of things material or things spiritual, and all the combinations of these things in their infinite variety. All possible systems or universes were open to Him. God was not in a hurry, for this was eternity, not time. He knew what He was about. He did what He pleased. There is truth again in these words of the Catechism, "*The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby for His own glory He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.*" It is God's freedom in His plan which the Bible and theology emphasize when they attribute it to His "good pleasure." Out of all the possible universes, each one of which He knew in all its details down to the fall of a sparrow, He chose the one He preferred, and that choice was His plan. The language I use may seem strong; but it is not too strong to describe the eternal plan of the Infinite God.

II. We pass to consider the relation of the divine plan to the various spheres of existence which it contemplated. First we will look at the realm of necessity, that is, at all the departments of being below the free and rational beings. We shall meet here with no serious difficulties. But the view of the universe thus given us is at once beautiful and impressive. In the book of Proverbs a striking delineation is presented of the divine plan, so far as it relates to the material universe. The Wisdom of God is per-

sonified and represented as telling the tale of His decree. Indeed, the Wisdom who speaks is, as one of the most competent authorities upon Old Testament theology says, "the plan of the universe which proceeded from God" (Oehler, "Old Testament Theology," Am. ed., p. 542). "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth: when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world" (Prov. viii. 22-26). By the eternal plan of God the nature of created things was established, their laws immutably fixed, and the whole course of nature settled. Modern science, especially by its so widely accepted hypothesis of evolution, presses upon every thoughtful mind the necessity of assuming such a plan. The present vast diversity of forms, inorganic and organic, is the result of the operation of matter and energy according to law. Nothing has come by chance or accident. The long process of evolution from the primitive unorganized substance of the universe to the harmony and variety of the present has been the result of necessary causes working according to fixed laws. Stardust, systems, worlds, the molten globe, continents and seas, mountains and rivers, vegetation, animal life, the wonderful profusion of inorganic and organic forms, have come each in its place and time. If there could have been a scientist with mind large enough and knowledge great enough to see the new-created universe, he would have been able to calculate from it all the course of natural history with all the certainty with which the astronomer to-day figures out an eclipse. But how shall we explain the primordial conditions out of which the harmony of the Cosmos has flowed? A slightly different arrangement of

the primitive atoms, and a wholly different universe would have resulted. The possible combinations of those atoms and their forces were infinite, and each would have resulted in a universe different from the rest. How shall we explain the fact that just this universe came, and no other? We are inevitably carried out of science, by the pressure of science itself, into the realm of theology. The only satisfactory explanation is that which is furnished by the eternal plan. (See Jevons, "Principles of Science," vol. ii., p. 434 seq., pp. 462-464). There in the eternal thought of God the problem of the universe was worked out in all its complicated processes even to its minutest details. The scientist, taking for his investigation some little province of the vast universe, traces out the results of the divine plan, and, as Kepler so strikingly expressed it, "thinks God's thought after Him."

III. We begin to face the real difficulties of our subject when we consider the relation of the divine plan to human freedom. We need to advance cautiously and to guard ourselves on every side. We cannot afford to imperil human freedom. It is a fact of essential importance in morals and religion. Human responsibility depends upon it, and apart from it we cannot vindicate the divine justice in its relation to man's character and conduct. Freedom is a very real thing. The moral consciousness of every man testifies to its reality, even though his intellect may repudiate it. Determinism in all its forms is subversive of all true theology, ethics, and philosophy. But God's plan in its all-comprehensiveness is also a reality. Bible and reason alike teach us that God is infinite and perfect. We cannot conceive of His leaving anything uncertain or unprovided for. A God who is taken by surprise is no God. Let us hold fast the two facts, God's all-embracing plan and human freedom, even though we cannot reconcile them. Both are true. Let neither suffer detriment.

God's plan established human freedom. He desired to have in His universe beings who should do His will not by compulsion but of their own free choice. This was what made His universe a moral universe instead of a merely physical one. The whole plan centered in those moral facts of which human freedom was the essential condition. We may be sure that God would respect what He had thus made and what was of so much importance in His great scheme.

But more than this—God's plan included the free choices and acts of men. He did not mean that there should be one class of activities in the universe, and that the most important, beyond his knowledge and control. As His omniscience worked out the problem of necessity before He formed his plan (if we may be allowed to speak of a before and after in the eternal thought of God), so it worked out the problem of freedom. He knew how each man would use his freedom, under all the possible conditions of life, before He determined to create the man and to put him into those circumstances. As memory in us goes back and perceives the free acts of our fellow-men, or as insight into character, within certain limits, goes forward and predicts the future free acts of men, so God's omniscience went out into the possibilities of freedom and compassed all the free acts of all possible men. Then He formed His plan in full view of all that was to be. The fall of Adam, the faith of Abraham, the Saviour's stopping by Jacob's well, the crucifixion at the hands of the Jews, were all free acts, and they were all in the divine plan. Reason teaches us that it must have been so, and the Bible reaffirms the truth. The predictions which form so large an element in the Scriptures imply God's foreordination of the free acts of men.

"But," says the Arminian, "it is only in a qualified sense that we are to represent God's plan as extending to the free acts of men. We admit that He foreknew them.

But He decreed them only in so far as He foreknew them. The decree is conditioned upon the foreknowledge." But the Arminian fails to reach the full truth. It may be granted that the plan depends in part upon the omniscience of God. But omniscience is not foreknowledge. The plan is one. How could God foreknow, until He had determined to create? Foreknowledge has to do not with possibilities but with certainties. Suppose God did know that Paul, if he were created and sent from Jerusalem to Damascus and should see the risen Christ and have His grace offered to him, would of his own free choice repent and believe: (did He foreknow that Paul would freely repent and believe until He had determined to create him and send him from Jerusalem to Damascus and offer him salvation through Christ?) The foreknowledge is conditioned upon the decree, not the decree upon the foreknowledge. I repeat, God's plan is one. He knew all the possibilities of His own action and of human freedom, in all their complicated connections and intricate interlacings, and the world which He determined to create out of all the possible worlds was the one which has existed with all the events necessary and free which have actually transpired. God knew what He was about and meant that that should be which has been.

"But," asks the Arminian once more, "is not this to destroy freedom altogether? Is it not thus reduced to a mere name?" This is not so easy a question to answer, and the answer which Calvinists have often given to it has been a confession of its justice. If the doctrine of freedom which Jonathan Edwards teaches, in his "Treatise on the Will," be true, then it is a mere name and the divine decree is maintained at its expense. Nevertheless, I think that an answer can be given which will enable us to preserve freedom intact, while we maintain the divine decree in its absoluteness—not an answer that will reconcile the Infinite with the finite, for that is impossible, but

an answer which will meet the objection. The divine plan does not make the free act necessary ; that would of course be a contradiction, it would be making it unfree. It exerts no efficient influence upon the human will. It rather establishes the freedom of the choice. All that it does is to render it certain to God, and there is in this certainty nothing which is at variance with liberty. When the time comes for me to choose, I am not the less free because God who has given me my freedom knows how I am going to choose, and has determined to allow me to choose in the way I please. I could do the opposite if I chose to do it ; only, that Spirit of God who besets us behind and before compassed my choice when I was still a possibility in the divine choice, and God planned to let me have my way. I believe that this is a sufficient answer to the Arminian. The difficulty of reconciling the Infinite with the finite, in this relation of God's decree to man's freedom, I cheerfully admit. But the difficulty does not belong to those who hold this doctrine exclusively ; the Arminian has equally to face it. The Arminian admits that God foreknows the free acts of men, but if He foreknows them, are they not certain, and if they are certain, how can they be free ? So strongly has this difficulty been felt that a few theologians of our time, who have been unwilling to admit the coexistence of the divine decree and human freedom, have denied the foreknowledge of God, so far as the free acts of men are concerned, thus purchasing peace upon this point at the expense of God's absoluteness, leaving God in helpless ignorance as to how the history of His universe is to come out !

IV. But we must go still further into the discussion of this difficult subject. The relation of the divine plan to human sin is the subject which now confronts us. The difficulties are certainly great, but let us face them bravely and serenely. We have to do here not so much with

opinions as with facts, and facts are sacred things however hard it may be to explain them. What are the facts? God is absolute—that is one. His omniscience, His decree, and His foreknowledge extend to all things. Sin exists—that is the other. Can we refrain from putting the two things together and admitting that God meant that sin should exist?

But we cannot stop here. The bare facts do not suffice. The questions are asked, and most pertinently, "How can God mean that sin should exist? Is not sin the one thing above all others hateful to God? Is it not contrary to His revealed will? How can God decree that which He hates?" Now we must not answer these questions in such a way as to impeach the divine holiness. We affirm with the strongest emphasis God's opposition to all sin. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. His pure and holy nature is utterly contrary to evil. It is altogether repugnant to Him. From one end of the Bible to the other God is represented as the stern and uncompromising enemy of all sin. He is light and in Him is no darkness at all. Better let God's absoluteness go, better think of Him as weak and ignorant and finite, than to allow a single spot, however small, to rest upon His perfect holiness.

How, then, shall we answer the questions just referred to? By distinguishing, as theologians in all the Christian ages have done, between the *efficient* and *permissive* decrees of God. There are some things which God means to have come to pass because He intends by His own efficiency to bring them to pass. There are other things which He means to have come to pass only as allowing others to bring them to pass. Human sin belongs to the latter category. When we say that God decrees it we mean that He determines not to prevent it, to permit human freedom to have its way in that which is contrary to the divine command. He does not thus approve of it

or in the least abate His utter opposition to it, but for wise reasons He determines to allow it. You ask, "Is it not contrary to His will?" I reply that the term will is ambiguous; it may mean God's decree, it may mean His desire and command. Sin is contrary to God's will in the latter sense; it is not contrary to His will in the former sense. We sometimes let our children do wrong, because we think it wiser not to prevent them, better to let them suffer the consequences, while all the while our command and our desire are against it. In such a case we have like God a *decretive* and a *preceptive* will, a will that is carried out and a will that is frustrated.

"But," it is asked once more, "why put the sin into the divine plan? Is it not enough to say that God could not prevent it? Do we not sufficiently explain the sin when we attribute it to its true cause, the free-will of man?" This would be to deal with the matter far too superficially. God could have prevented it, if He had seen fit so to do. Granting that He could not make a man free and not free at the same time, so that freedom is always capable of abuse; yet He might, had He chosen so to do, have refrained from creating the beings who sin; He might have made them without freedom; He might have placed them in circumstances in which there was no temptation to the sin. Take the case of Adam. God might have made no Adam, and there would have been no fall. He might have kept the tempter out of the garden.

Moreover, on the assumption that the permission of sin does not form a part of God's plan, what a world we have! There is no doubt that sin is the most important of all facts in the world. It is the awful reality, which no man in his senses can deny. And yet are we to suppose that it has come in spite of God, and that He did not mean it (to be so? Did the Devil and Adam make it a different world from what God intended? Do not, I beseech you,

answer yes, because you want to have it so. Face the facts. You purchase relief from one class of difficulties at a price too tremendous. You leave God no longer on the throne but put Him in a position where any of His subjects can get the better of Him. However great the difficulties in such a view, leave the reins in God's hands. The holy God, for wise reasons, has determined from the first to permit all the sin which has taken place, not because He did not hate it, not because He could not have prevented it, but because on the whole He thought it best to permit it. The presumptuous sinner who thinks He has got the better of God is utterly mistaken. God in the solemn stillness of eternity thought upon that sin; He determined to allow it; He has provided for it in His plan, for its thwarting and its punishment. The poor foolish sinner in the abuse of his freedom cannot escape from God. The great and glorious plan of God goes steadily forward to its accomplishment, in spite of the sinner's rebellion and even by means of it.

V. And thus we are brought into the central and inmost difficulty of this great subject: *Why* did God see fit to make the permission of sin a part of His plan? What were His wise reasons? How shall we vindicate God's wisdom in the permission of sin? It is the problem of the Theodicy. Let us face this, too, not with the hope of doing what no man has ever done, that is of solving the problem, but that we may discover how far our present finite knowledge allows us to go in the direction of a solution.

But first, let me say that this problem is not confined to any one system of theology, or even of religion. Sin exists, and every thinking man must give some explanation of it. If there be a God, His relation to it must be explained. Every theology and every philosophy finds itself sooner or later compelled to essay the task. Heathenism has generally found relief in ascribing evil to the nature

of things. Its gods are themselves unholy. Or the universe is divided between a principle of good and a principle of evil. Or, as Buddhism conceives it, sin and evil are inherent in existence and annihilation is the only good. Philosophy has sought relief in the denial of the evil of sin, attributing it to the finiteness of man or regarding it as a necessary but temporary stage in his development. Christianity alone has furnished an explanation that can be said to have at all met the difficulty.

The typical Christian treatment of the subject is found in the famous *Théodicée* of Leibnitz. According to this great philosopher, God had before His eternal thought all possible systems—systems without evil either natural or moral, and systems with evil of both kinds in every possible proportion and combination. He chose the system under which we live, the universe which He actually created, because it was the best. The sin and the natural evil inherent in it are the necessary means of the greatest good. This "Optimism" of Leibnitz was accepted and further developed by the New England theologians, Edwards, Hopkins, Bellamy, and their compeers. They silenced objectors by asking whether God might, if He would, have formed a wiser plan and created a better world. If a world with no sin in it would have been better, why did not God choose it? This theodicy, which has otherwise much to commend it, was deprived of real value by the doctrine of the will held by both Leibnitz and the New England theologians. They taught a determinism which reduced freedom to a mere name and made God to all intents and purposes the Author of sin. The distinction between the permissive and efficient decrees of God, while in terms retained, was practically abandoned. Men were what God has determined they should be, some saved, to the glory of His grace, some lost, to the glory of His justice.

The theodicy of Leibnitz emphasized the divine effi-

ciency to the extent of obscuring, if not of ignoring, human freedom. It was natural that theories should arise in which the human factor in the great problem should be emphasized. One of the most notable of these was that advanced by Dr. N. W. Taylor, of New Haven. He did not put his theodicy into the form of a positive assertion, but modestly affirmed, that "it may be impossible that God should exclude all moral evil from a moral system, and of course from the best moral system." God might, had He desired to do so, have chosen a system in which human freedom had no place, but having chosen a system involving freedom, it might be that He could not prevent all sin in it. Sin might be necessarily incidental to a moral system. Even God cannot make a thing to be and not to be at the same time, and it might be that God in making men free by that very fact made it certain that a certain amount of sin would follow. Undoubtedly this view affords a fitting corrective to the other. But it may be questioned whether it does not go too far in its suggestion that God may not be able to prevent all sin in a moral system. Freedom is not such an uncontrollable power that God could not keep it in bounds by moral means if He desired to do so. God prevents all sin in heaven with no detriment to freedom. He might have established such a system as would have insured the right use of freedom in every part of His universe. The possibility of sin is essential to freedom, but not the actuality of it. There are moral systems and moral systems. It is not a matter of course that every moral system is the best system.

Both these theodicies represent elements of the one truth. We must hold fast, on the one hand, to the sovereignty of God, the reality of the divine plan; and, on the other, to the reality of that freedom which God's plan has established and which He surely will respect. This is the best system. It is the best *moral* system. God per-

mitted the present amount of sin and suffering because it was wisest to do so. Looking at the universe as a whole, considering the ends God had in view, it is a better universe than it would be had God permitted no sin. Sin is man's work not God's, but God knew what He was about when He determined to permit a certain amount of it in His world. He meant to work out a higher manifestation of His love and a higher type of human character than would be possible without it, in a word, to secure a greater good.

Our great trouble in dealing with this subject is that we look at God's plan only in relation to sin, whereas we should look at it equally in its relation to redemption. We need to follow Paul's line of thought in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in which he tells us that "where sin abounded grace did abound more exceedingly; that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (vv. 20, 21). Let us look at the world into which we are ushered by birth. It is a world in which sin and God's grace are working together, and in which suffering and death serve as checks and punishments upon sin and as means of discipline in holiness. In the midst of these influences our freedom develops and our probation is passed through. There are tremendous risks, but there are glorious rewards. The soul that goes through the struggle of sin and grace, through the tribulations and sufferings of life, that knows the love of Christ and learns the lesson of his cross, and then passes through death into eternal life has cause to thank God that the world is just what it is. It can even borrow Augustine's words, "O blessed sin which was worthy to have such and so great a Redeemer!" I can see how a theodicy that gave no place to human freedom would be a mockery; but if we can believe that God gives to every soul the power and the opportunity to obtain the salvation which Christ

has wrought, the case becomes different. (I believe with all my heart that He does give to every soul, whether in Christian or heathen lands, both power and opportunity.) I believe that the advantages of the world in which we live far outweigh its disadvantages.) I believe it is a blessing to be brought into such a world and to have a chance to win its glorious prize, and this not only in spite of the risks, but even because of the risks. [And I believe that those who are finally lost are lost wholly through their own fault, because they would not accept the grace so freely offered to them, and that for them, looking at it not from the standpoint of their failure but of the opportunity God gave them, it was a blessing that they were brought into the world.]

The story is told of old Dr. Beecher, when he was a professor in Lane Theological Seminary, that he was one day lecturing to his students upon the objections to the doctrine of free agency. "He had compared," says the narrator of the anecdote, "the tremendous perils and fearful responsibilities of such an endowment on the one hand, with the glorious privileges and possibilities which it involved on the other, when suddenly, snatching off his spectacles, he drew a picture of an assembly of all God's intelligent universe summoned into a *quasi* state of existence, in which they should be capable of understanding the reasons for and against being created, clothed with the responsibility of free agency, and permitted to decide the question for themselves. Then, leaping from his chair, and walking back and forth upon the platform, he poured out, in a few short, pithy sentences, the peril of falling and the damnation of hell on the one side, and the blessedness of standing and the possibility of restoration by divine love and the heights of immortal glory to be gained on the other, and then, as if standing in the place of the Creator Himself, and putting the question to vote, Shall I create or not create? he made the shout go up as

the voice of ten thousand times ten thousand, 'Create, Create!'"

No thoughtful and candid Christian will claim that, when all is said, we have a complete theodicy. We may discover in their great outlines God's reasons for giving the permission of sin a place in His plan, but much will still be left to faith. Sin is an awful thing, and there is an awful amount of sin in the world. The earth is full of suffering which seems to bring no higher blessing. And then there is the dark mystery of the future life, eternal retribution. We must have faith. We must have patience. The final and perfect theodicy will not come till the Day of Judgment. Then God will show to the universe the perfect wisdom and justice, yea, the holy love of all His works. In the light of the end the divine plan will be glorious. When God, the Builder, has "made the pile complete," we shall duly praise God the Architect.

God's plan originated in holy love; it is carried out in holy love; it will be consummated in holy love. That love compasses the universe about and enfolds it in its embrace. (God's hand is everywhere. Nothing is in vain.) God's eternal purpose was a purpose of redemption in Christ Jesus our Lord. That is our strength, our safeguard, our joy, our hope.

In conclusion, a word about the value of this doctrine. It is not one of the essential ones. Those who are unwilling to accept it may be in all essentials as good Christians as those who make most of it. It has, however, its very great importance. As I said at the beginning of this chapter, it makes strong Christians. There are times in the life of the individual, and nations, and the race, when evil seems to get the upper hand in the world. The devil seems to have gotten the better of God. The cause of holiness and truth suffers. Then we fall back on the eternal plan of God. He has known all this from the beginning. He has the reins in His hands and will not let them go.

He will cause the wrath of man to praise Him, and restrain the remainder of wrath. Behind this strife and turmoil, this vacillation and doubtfulness of the struggle, is the eternal plan of the eternal God. No one can thwart Him. We are free, but He is sure. His will will be done. Especially are we never to forget that redemption is the central fact in the plan. This is God's great end in His dealings with the world. He will carry it through. The universe is to be one in Christ the Saviour.

XIV.

CREATION

GOD has carried His eternal plan into execution by His three great "works"—as the theologians call them—of Creation, Providence, and Redemption. In the present chapter we shall discuss the first of these. The cosmogony or story of creation, at once a history and a poem, contained in the first and second chapters of Genesis is the chief source from which the Christian doctrine is derived. The truths here asserted are taken for granted elsewhere in the Bible. It is only in the New Testament teachings respecting the relation of creation to the person of the Saviour and redemption through him that any advance is made in the later Scriptures upon the simple foundation doctrine of this Prologue to the Word of God.

I. The Biblical cosmogony does not stand alone. Almost all the ethnic religions of the past and the present have also their stories of creation. In their more important features these cosmogonies have a common likeness. They all go back to a time when the things which now surround us were non-existent. They show how by successive stages the heaven and the earth and all the varied forms of the universe came into being. Some of them are very beautiful and suggestive. We are all familiar with the Greek myth of creation which Hesiod has preserved—how at first there were only Chaos and Eros, or Love, how under the influence of the latter, as the principle of order and harmony, Chaos was divided into Tartarus and Earth and the Earth gave birth to the Heaven

and the Sea, how—still under the influence of Eros—the Heaven and the Earth produced the Titans and the Cyclops, how the Titan Chronos begat Zeus and the gods, and how at last the race of men sprang from the soil. One of the most interesting cosmogonies, which stands in close relation to the Biblical, is the Chaldaean Genesis which George Smith deciphered from some broken clay tablets discovered at Nineveh and now in the British Museum (see Smith's "Chaldaean Account of Genesis," p. 62; cf. "Records of the Past," vol. ix., p. 115 seq.). "When above were not raised the heavens," this account begins, "and below on the earth a plant had not grown up; the abyss also had not broken up their boundaries; the chaos (or water) Tiamat (the sea) was the producing mother of the whole of them." Then it goes on to describe the creation of the great gods, the separation of the sea and the land, the creation of the heavenly bodies, the establishment of the seasons and the creation of the beasts.

The Scriptural account of creation bears in many respects a close resemblance to these heathen cosmogonies. But as soon as we begin to examine it carefully we find that it is marked by great and essential differences. The Bible alone gives us the pure theistic conception of God, as the absolute Being, the self-existent Creator. The heathen traditions are all vitiated by some radically wrong conception of God and of His relation to the world. Emanistic, pantheistic, or dualistic elements are present in almost all of them. Generally the starting-point of creation is the chaos, out of which all things come. The gods themselves are created, so that the cosmogonies are theogonies as well. But the account of Genesis puts first the self-existent God. The universe is due to His *fiat*. There is no pre-existent material and no blind process of development. The chaos is itself of His making and His Spirit

"Dove-like sits brooding on the vast abyss."

From the first, God is represented as freely creating by the word of His power.

We have here a fact which can only be explained by the assumption that this wonderful cosmogony of Genesis is the result of divine revelation and inspiration. Where it originally came from we do not know. Undoubtedly it antedates the book of Genesis in its present form. Not unlikely it is the substance of a primitive tradition handed down orally from generation to generation. (The heathen cosmogonies may be perverted forms of the same tradition.) But whatever be the origin of the Biblical cosmogony, it bears the evidence of its truth upon it and shines in its own light, which is a divine light.) Its truth, as it is set off by the dark background of the heathen traditions, shows it to be from God. (The religious thought of man has not in its highest flights gone beyond the doctrine of this first chapter of the Bible.)

II. But the Scriptural account of creation does not come into competition with the heathen cosmogonies alone. There is also a scientific cosmogony. Physical science does not, indeed, attempt to account for the origin of the universe, but it does carry us back to a time when only the primitive elements existed, and discloses to us the processes and the order in which the present inorganic and organic forms have come into being. Astronomy, geology, and the other physical sciences furnish us with a natural history of the universe, the substantial truth of which we cannot doubt.

Does the Scriptural cosmogony agree with the scientific? The question is asked by each new generation, as the discoveries of physical science enlarge our knowledge of the past. Do the Book of Revelation and the Book of Nature coincide?

The question is one of fact rather than of theory, and it is not so easy to answer as might at first appear. The Bible is not a scientific treatise. It was given us for pur-

poses wholly religious, as Cardinal Baronius said, "to teach us how to go to heaven, and not how the heavens go" (Lenormant, "Beginnings of History," Am. trans., Pref., p. x). We cannot, without further ado, make out two schemes, the one representing the facts of revelation and the other those of science, and place the two side by side. The Bible and the physical sciences do, indeed, in the case before us, deal with the same subject, but they approach it from wholly different directions, deal with it in an altogether different way, and aim at totally different ends. The selection, arrangement, and treatment of the facts are determined by the difference of motive.

Physical science, when it deals with the past history of the universe, is concerned wholly with second causes. It traces out, so far as the means at its disposal permit, each link in the long chain of the world's development. It aims at completeness of detail, at the discovery of the genetic relations, at chronological order. It divides the past into ages and periods, and endeavors to fill each with its proper contents, describing the physical conditions, and, when life has appeared, the flora and fauna. Exactitude is its great end. Facts are of more value to it than ideas. As we have seen, it confesses its incompetence to account for the origin of the universe. So it does not trouble itself with questions about the dependence of things. If there are spiritual beings higher than man, it has nothing to do with them. It admits the presence of final causes in nature only grudgingly. It enters into no discussion of the spiritual and religious relations of things. I may be sure that geology will give me the history of the past in a scheme in which every discovered fact has a place, and in which the order of causal dependence and time is rigidly followed.

Not so the Bible. It is essentially a religious Book. It is only incidentally, if at all, that it touches upon the subjects with which science is concerned, and when it does

so its motive is religious. It deals with God and divine things, and it treats the history of the world's past only as it stands related to God. There is no reason to believe that the sacred writers ever turn aside to teach their readers the facts of science or philosophy. Its object is redemption. The Fall has not rendered men incompetent to discover scientific or philosophical truth, and revelation affords no royal road to such knowledge. It is the moral and spiritual darkness of man's soul which the Scriptures aim to enlighten. It is true that all truth, spiritual, moral, and intellectual, is one, and the light which the Bible gives upon religious subjects often illumines to a greater or less extent the other spheres of knowledge. But, except so far as this is the case, the Scriptural writers in all matters of merely human knowledge share the limitations of their contemporaries. All those popular misconceptions of the facts of nature which belong to the unscientific mind, and which modern science is only slowly overcoming, are to be found in the Bible—not indeed in its teachings, but in its modes of thought and expression. This is one of the facts which give the Bible its great value as a book intended for common men.

The cosmogony of Genesis corresponds to the general character of the Bible. The ends it contemplates are wholly religious. It aims to describe the beginnings of the world, so far as they are necessary to the understanding of redemption or the establishment of God's kingdom, which is the great subject of the Bible. Thus it shows that the God of creation, who is also the God of redemption, is the personal God. It tells us that the universe is due to His free self-determination and in no sense the result of necessity. It points out to us the fact that creation advanced through successive stages to its culmination in man, created in the divine image and the subject of God's kingdom. In opposition to all theories of the universe which would make God in any sense the author of

evil, it solemnly declares, as each cycle of creation is completed, "And God saw that it was good," concluding the whole account with the words, "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good." Thus the way was opened for the narrative of the introduction of sin into the world by the abuse of human freedom. Finally, it shows how in God's creative activity, and His rest at its close, the foundation was laid for the institution of the Sabbath, which was destined to be of such untold importance in the religious history of mankind.

These are the great ends at which the cosmogony of Genesis aimed, and which determined the selection and arrangement of the facts. It would not be strange if the result were a very different arrangement from that which the scientific cosmogony gives. Such a result would not in any way impugn the truth of the account as a part of the divine revelation or throw any discredit upon the inspiration of its author. The chronological order might be only the framework for an arrangement that was largely topical. But, as I have already said, the question is not so much of theory as of fact. What do the facts show, agreement or disagreement? In reply, I must confess that I do not find such absolute agreement as is claimed to exist by some of the more zealous harmonists. There is not the slightest evidence that the author of the cosmogony knew anything about the Nebular Hypothesis, and considering the discredit into which that hypothesis has fallen among men of science in our own time, we need not regret that this is the case. Neither do I see any reason to believe that he knew anything about the processes by which our globe passed from the gaseous to the molten state, and from the molten to the solid, and by which the present relations of earth and atmosphere were established. It would be going quite too far to assert that he had any acquaintance with the sciences of botany and zoölogy and their principles of classification. Whoever

the author of this marvellous cosmogony was, and from whatever sources, under the guidance of the divine Spirit, he derived his knowledge of the universe, there is nothing to show that he was vouchsafed any prophetic anticipations of the discoveries of modern science.

X Nevertheless, when these qualifications are made, it seems to me that there remains a very remarkable agreement between the two cosmogonies. So far as the particular purposes and the peculiar limitations of the two points of view permit, the cosmogony of revelation and the cosmogony of physical science correspond. It is evident that we have before us the same facts, though beheld in different lights and from a different angle. This seems to be one of the cases which shows how the light of revelation in spiritual things can throw a real though shadowed illumination upon other fields of knowledge. The best modern Hebrew exegesis admits that the days of Genesis were not literal days of twenty-four hours each, but day-periods, of indefinite duration. Like God's Sabbath, which according to our Saviour has continued since the conclusion of creation (John v. 17), His creative days were æons. Within the framework of the Hexaëmeron, or six-days' work, the Biblical cosmogony presents a number of facts in which it shows itself in striking accord with the teachings of science. It places first in the activities of the universe the production of light, making it precede the creation of the heavenly bodies. The creation which it describes involves a long process, running through successive ages, with intervening periods of natural development. It sets forth the true order of evolution, the inorganic world, vegetable life, the lower and higher animals and man. It connects man, so far as his lower nature is concerned, with the material world, while it refers his intellectual and spiritual powers to the direct inbreathing of the divine Spirit. The differences in detail between the two cosmogonies become insignificant, when we take into

account the different objects contemplated and the necessary limitations of the two standpoints. The over-zealous harmonist, who will press every detail into exact correspondence, lays himself open to the sneer of the sceptic. But the sober-minded theologian, careful to discriminate between the things that differ, and ready to admit all real divergencies, can show, over and above the minor differences, an agreement which can only be explained upon the assumption that this primitive story of creation is the simple truth, and therefore in essential harmony with the truth as brought to light by the investigations of physical science.

X
It remains, before leaving this branch of our subject, to speak briefly of the relation of the Biblical cosmogony to the scientific theory of evolution. I say, the scientific theory, for there is a philosophical theory of evolution which is in principle irreconcilable with theism, and of course with the account of creation in Genesis, and of which, therefore, it is needless for me to speak here. The scientific theory does not attempt to account for everything. It is a hypothesis which has proved valuable for the explanation of extensive tracts in the realm of nature, especially in the organic sphere, but which is far from claiming to explain the origin of the universe, or to bridge over all the gaps in its history. Now, the statements of the first chapter of Genesis leave abundant room for the application of any moderate and really scientific theory of evolution. The *Hexaëmeron*, with its steady progress forward and upward, and its confinement of God's creative activity to the introduction of the fundamental forms of finite existence, almost seems to have been arranged so as to admit within its framework the operation of such a law as that of evolution. Evolution, rightly understood, is simply the method of God's providence in the physical world. It is in no way opposed to the creative action of God. The latter is the necessary condition of the former ;

the former is the carrying out and fulfilment of the latter. As in the redemptive revelation the supernatural and the natural were combined, new elements introduced by means of inspiration and miracle, and then these new elements themselves followed the course of ordinary historical development, so in the progress of the world's primitive history God at certain epochs introduced new forms of existence by His creative efficiency, and these forms thereupon entered into the course of evolution under the ordinary operations of natural law. In both alike the power of God is operative.

III. We have now come to the point where we must look more closely into the nature of creation. What is creation? The word has often been abused and made to do duty for conceptions altogether foreign to it. Thus it has been said that God's preserving providence is a continual creation, with the result of confusing two ideas that are wholly distinct. So theologians have spoken of an eternal creation, or have explained it as the moulding and shaping of a pre-existent material. But, in spite of these erroneous interpretations, the meaning of the word creation, as used in the Scriptures, and in the language of common life—which in this case perfectly agrees with the teachings of sound theological science—is perfectly clear. (Creation is a new beginning.) It implies that something has been brought into existence that did not previously exist. God is the absolute First Cause. Finite things have not had an eternal being, as He has had. Matter, energy, life, spirit, are not self-existent. There was a time when they began to be.)

Theology affirms that creation is "out of nothing." This definition is a stumbling-block to many, but it seems to be essential, rightly understood, to the theistic, and so to the Christian, doctrine of creation. It denies that there is any eternal substance outside of God, like the unformed substance, the *hyle amorphos* of the Platonic philosophy,

out of which God has shaped all things. It also denies that God has made things out of His own essence, or that they are in any sense an emanation from Him. Its meaning is simply that which has just been assigned to the word creation : God has called into being something that did not before exist. "God said, Let there be light ; and light was." The nothing of which we speak is not viewed as a kind of material out of which things have been made. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews clearly expresses the idea of creation out of nothing, when he says, "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear" (Heb. xi. 3). The objection has been raised that creation out of nothing implies an effect without a cause—*ex nihilo nihil fit*, out of nothing nothing is made. But no mistake could be greater than that which this objection implies. We ascribe the effect to the greatest and most potent of all causes, the will of the absolute Being Himself. The maxim that nothing comes out of nothing has no application at all to creation. It belongs wholly to the realm of created things, and has to do, not with the operations of the First Cause, but entirely with second causes. It is simply another statement of the principle of finite causation, or of the scientific law of the conservation of matter and energy. All that it affirms is, that in the world as now constituted every finite effect must have a finite cause. It tells us absolutely nothing about the origination of the universe. That can only be explained through the free determination of an infinite Will.

Can we form any conception of creation ? Certainly not any adequate conception. Creation is unique ; we can find nothing like it in the whole range of our knowledge. It is the infinite act of an infinite Being, a way that is higher than our ways, and that springs from a thought that is higher than our thoughts. No man ever saw it, and no man could understand it if he did. It could not

be perceived through the senses. It is impossible to picture it to the imagination. Suppose you or I had been present—if such an anachronism be supposable—when God created life, what should we have seen? Nothing. Before the creative act there would have been inorganic matter, afterward protoplasm; but we should not have known that life was there until it began to produce its effects. God's creation is not an act which comes with the tempest, the earthquake, or the fire, but with the still small voice. Like the miracle, which is also an infinite act of the infinite Being, a direct manifestation of the First Cause, creation is invisible. When Christ multiplied the loaves and fishes so as to feed the five thousand, who of all the multitude beheld the process? Before there were five loaves and two small fishes, afterward the loaves and fishes multiplied a thousand-fold. Do you imagine anyone stole the secret of that miracle? Did anyone see the water change into wine? It is of the very nature of a miracle thus to elude all observation and in this sense to be incomprehensible, and creation is like it in these respects. And yet, while I would thus strongly emphasize the element of mystery in creation, it seems to me that we may find some analogies in the sphere of our experience which will throw a little light upon its nature. God has created man in His own image, and the Infinite is mirrored in the human soul as in no other form of natural existence. It is to our own spirits that we go when we wish to gain the highest knowledge of which we are capable respecting the nature and activities of the divine Spirit. Now, there are at least two operations of the human soul which may be compared, though so much lower, with the creative acts of God, and it is interesting to note that a recognition of this fact has led men to call both of these classes of operations creative. The first is the action of man's free will. This does not indeed have the power to bring into being a new thing in the material

world, but it does produce something new in the spiritual world, by which the direction and operation of material forces may be altogether changed. Man has the power which the brute has not—by a choice which is spiritual, and a volition which is equally spiritual—to set free energy and produce great changes in the external world. The President of the United States sits in the White House, and touching an electric button, starts the great Corliss Engine hundreds of miles away in the Exposition building at New Orleans. How came that to pass? By a choice and a volition, setting free and directing the energy in a few molecules of the brain. The physical force, I grant, was not created; it was only directed. But what was that spiritual energy which has the wonderful power of directing physical energy? Was it not a new thing? did not the free will act creatively, and have we not here an analogy, true so far as it goes, even though it may not go very far, of that infinite creative activity of God, by which matter and energy were first brought into being and the human soul itself called out of non-existence into reality? The other operation of the soul to which we ascribe a creative quality is the imagination. It is illustrated in some of its highest exercises by the artist's work. He has indeed, to a certain extent, the material of his constructive thought in the things of the external world and the ideas which are the common property of man. But artistic genius does more than arrange. The common language of the race expresses a real truth when it declares that the artist creates. Forms of beauty expressive of noble ideals make their appearance under the magic touch of his brush or chisel. They had no previous existence. There is in them an element that is new. So the poet or the writer of fiction sets new ideas before us, or characters which live and move in the world of thought, if not in the outside world, and have untold power to influence the lives of men. I readily admit that

all this is but a far-off imitation of what God has done in His infinitely higher and better way. But I cannot but think that those who have felt the glow and sense of power which the creative work of art engenders, can understand, though dimly, something of God's work and the joy He felt as He beheld His masterpieces issuing from His hand and saw that they were "very good."

IV. We have thus far dealt chiefly with the doctrine of creation which belongs to a theistic natural theology. But there is also a distinctively Christian doctrine of creation. The germs of this higher view are to be found in the cosmogony of Genesis ; its fully expanded form in the New Testament. To these Christian elements in the doctrine we shall now address ourselves.

Creation is the work of the Triune God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have each their part in it. It originated with the Father, it was executed by the Son, it was carried out through the Holy Spirit, or, if I may so speak, the Spirit was the immanent principle of creation. But in an especial sense creation was the work of the Son. We have touched upon this truth when treating of the relation of the Christ to the world, and need speak of it only briefly here. He who was to become incarnate that he might redeem the fallen world, was the Maker of the world. He laid the basis of redemption in creation. He preformed the world which he made to the redemption which he was to accomplish. The world was thus from the first in a peculiar sense his own. It bears the mark of the Son upon it. The eternal power and Godhead which it makes known is in a peculiar sense the power and Godhead of the Son. The world he created was the world into which he was himself to enter by taking its material and spiritual form upon him and becoming a link in its evolution. This was to be the theatre of his highest self-manifestation in the drama of redeeming love. It was from the first, by right of creation by the eternal

Logos, Christ's world. The devil might gain the upper-hand for a time, but he was only the usurper certain to be destroyed by the rightful King. Man made in the image of God was made by the Logos the uncreated image of God, in his own image and likeness, and his dominion over nature was a dominion which belonged to him in virtue of his relation to the divine Son.

Creation originated in the love of God. This is the same fact which met us when we were considering the eternal plan of God. It was the overflowing love of God, seeking new objects upon which to spend itself, that led Him to create. The sin which has so marred the creation and made it so difficult to perceive its original nature as it issued in its primitive goodness from the divine hand, blinds us to this fact, which it is the object of the gospel to reveal again to us. If we could see things as they are, we should not doubt it, and now that God has made it known to us through the work of Christ, it is our duty to believe where we cannot see, and to look forward in full confidence to that time when God shall show us that He has done all things in love. In creation God made that He might give, and gave that He might make. We have seen before that love is self-bestowal. In the creation of the world the self-bestowal which had found its satisfaction in the perfect blessedness of the holy Trinity, found new objects by making finite beings.

But self-manifestation is closely connected with self-bestowal. God also created that He might express His perfections in the finite universe. Creation was a revelation of God's self. The world is what it is because God is what He is. As the painting or statue makes us acquainted with the artist's thought, so the creation makes us acquainted with the character and thought of God. Even the material universe reflects God's attributes. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work" (Psalm xix. 1). The reason

which the Apostle Paul gives why the heathen are without excuse in their sin, is that "the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity" (Rom. i. 20). The "everlasting power and divinity" are the essential glory of God, His infinite perfections, His attributes. Nature is not merely a hieroglyphic by interpreting which we can learn God's thought and will; it is itself a manifest word of God; it bears His impress upon it; it is a revelation of Him. God did not make something altogether different from Himself when He created the world; He produced a finite similitude of Himself. Therein lies the reason for the idolatry into which mankind has been constantly falling. The heathen have recognized in nature something divine, but they have not distinguished between the copy and the original, between the reflection and the reality. So they have "exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever" (Rom. i. 25). It was meant that men should "look through nature up to nature's God." The divine perfections are manifested only partially in the individual forms of the natural world; they express each some phase or aspect of God's glory; there shines on each some ray from the perfect Light. But God has concentrated His self-revelation through the finite in the being who is the culmination of the long series of creations. Man was made in the image of God. He does not express merely a single aspect of the divine perfection, but is the finite representation of God's spiritual essence. In him we do not merely discover scattered lights which suggest the glory of the perfect Sun, but the Orb of Light itself is imaged in its perfect form and beauty in this highest of all the creatures. I will not anticipate what is to be said hereafter respecting the divine image. Suffice it now to call attention to the fact already

noticed, that the creation of man in God's image lays the basis for the incarnation, in which the Word became flesh and the eternal Son wrought out in human life the perfect sonship. Sin has marred the divine image in us, but when we wish to know God as He is, we can turn from ourselves to the perfect Man Christ Jesus, and see in him the perfect image of the perfect God. And more and more as Christ comes to dwell in us and to change us into his own image, we can discover in our own souls the lineaments of God. The pure in heart see God.

Finally, Creation had for its object redemption, or the establishment of God's kingdom. It thus was the first step to the carrying out of the eternal plan of God, which also aimed at redemption. The world was to be the arena of that highest display of God's love, the salvation of the fallen race. Man was to be the subject of redemption, the son of the kingdom. Christ the Redeemer was here to be incarnate. If God was omniscient and had from eternity formed His plan of redemption, we cannot doubt that when He called the universe into being, He had clearly in His thought all the wonderful history that was to transpire in it. Sinai and Calvary were made with reference to the Law and the Gospel. Of course, if this view be true, creation was effected with reference to the future existence of sin in the world. All that issued from the divine hand was pure and good. But God knew that man by the abuse of freedom would mar the perfect works of God ; He had permissively ordained that it should be so. And so He made a world which provided restraints and punishments for sin, as well as facilities for a work of redemptive grace.

Thus God's work was done. The morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. The six days' creative toil was finished, and God rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. Now begins human history and with it human sin, while God enters upon His work of redemption.

XV.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

WE have discussed the subject of creation, and now we ask, What is the relation in which God stands to the world which He has created? It is easy to see that this is a question not only of theoretical, but also of vast practical, importance. For here we are in the world, and we need to know whether God is here also, and whether He is concerning himself with its ongoings. Is He a God afar off, dwelling in some remote Heaven, not troubling Himself with the affairs of this world, its material processes, the life of plant and animal, the joys and sorrows of men? Is He like those gods of whom Tennyson tells us in "The Lotos-Eaters," who

"Lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurled
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world;
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and
fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying
hands?"

Is He such a God as that? Or is He the God who is everywhere present and active in His world, who is directly interested in all its affairs, from the fall of a sparrow to the fate of an empire, from the beauty of the lily to the provision for the wants of His people?

Thank God, the Christian revelation answers these questions with no uncertain sound. No doctrine in the

whole range of religious truth is taught by the Bible more unequivocally or with greater fulness. In the presence of those false views of God and His relation to the world with which our age abounds, we need, therefore, to proclaim with the strongest emphasis the simple but profound truth of God's providence which comes to us through the Scriptures, and is verified by Christian experience.

I. The Christian doctrine of providence is distinctively theistic. It declares that the Absolute Being is the living, personal God, and asserts His free disposal over nature and man. He is not the unknown God of agnosticism, who is hidden behind the impenetrable veil of the finite, and of whom we are certain only that He is the cause and ground of all things. He is not the impersonal and unconscious God of pantheism, who is lost in the world and can in no sense be said to control it. He is not the "absentee God" of deism, who has left his world to its own ways since He has brought it into being, and has done so for the wise reason that He has had no power to interpose in its affairs. The God of providence made the world for Himself, He sustains it in being, He is a factor in all its activities, He is its free Ruler. The relation in which He stands to the world through His providence is as close and vital as that in which He stood in its creation.

The providence of God may be considered under three aspects, as preservation, immanence, and government. We will look at each of these.

1. By preservation is meant God's providence as exercised in maintaining His creatures in being. According to the deistical view of the universe, the world when once created is self-existent. God has, it is true, the power to annihilate it, if He will—at least this is admitted with respect to the material world—but unless He sees fit to do so, it will continue to exist. But the scriptural teaching points to a closer relation of God to the creation than this. Finite beings continue in existence only by a constant ex-

ercise of the divine power. If this were for an instant withdrawn, they would cease to be, as the shadow ceases when the substance which casts it is removed, or as the light ceases when the lamp is extinguished.

The continuance of material things is due to the upholding and preserving power of God. The scientific law of conservation, according to which the quantity of matter and energy in the world remains always the same, and can be neither increased nor diminished by any processes now at work or under the control of man, is simply the expression of the uniformity of the divine preservation in the material sphere. Matter and energy are the constants of the universe, but it is only because God is behind them. It is for this reason, and this only, that we can speak of the uniformity of causation. Moreover, God maintains the properties and laws of matter and energy. The great cosmical arrangements by which the perpetuity of life on our planet is maintained are due to the same preserving power. God Himself has given us the promise that, "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease" (Gen. viii. 22).

In like manner God's preserving providence is the cause of the maintenance of life. What is life? Is it an independent entity, a principle which has the power to co-ordinate the activities of matter, or is it only a function of matter, something which could be explained entirely by matter and energy, if we only had the key to its mystery? In either case it is upheld in being by God's constant energizing. The life of plant and animal alike is due to the divine preservation. Death is the result of the withdrawal of His supporting power. "Thou takest away their breath," said the Psalmist, speaking of the animal creation, "they die and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the ground" (Ps. civ. 29, 30).

So also God preserves the human spirit. As its first existence was the result of a divine inbreathing (Gen. ii. 7), so its continuance is the result of God's power constantly exercised (Ps. xxxvi. 6, lxvi. 9; Job xxxiv. 14, 15). It is commonly asserted that the human soul is possessed of what is called "natural immortality," that is, that it is indestructible, and theologians often go so far as to say that God could not annihilate a soul if He desired. But there is not a hint of such a doctrine in the Bible, and those who think that by asserting it they can refute the unscriptural doctrine of the annihilation of the ungodly, purchase relief at quite too high a price. If God should withdraw His power from the soul, it would sink into nothingness, and if it be true, as the Bible seems to teach, that no soul is ever thus "cast as rubbish to the void," it is not because God cannot annihilate it, but because He will not. Moreover, God maintains the powers of the soul in existence. The intellect, the sensibility, the will, the free agency of man, the activity of conscience, are possible only upon this condition. "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28). Even more strikingly is the spiritual life dependent upon God. For what is the spiritual life? It is the right relation of the soul to God, the state of things in which God's favor is granted to man and man lives in communion with God. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). When the soul is by faith united with God, He pours into it His own divine life. When men sin against Him he withdraws His gracious influences, and the result is spiritual death.

2. Another element in God's providence is His immanence. Preservation has to do with the maintenance of the creation in existence. Immanence has to do with its activities. God does not only uphold things and let them work according to their properties and laws; He

Himself works in them and through them. He is the First Cause not merely in the sense that He is the Creator and Preserver, but also in the sense that He energizes in the second causes. This is the great element of truth among all the errors of pantheism. God does not stand on the outside of His creation, but is everywhere present and active in it. The dew-drop and the grass-blade evidence the presence and power of God as truly as the sun or the planet. The Bible gives great prominence to this doctrine of God's immanence. Indeed, it goes so far, especially in the Old Testament, that sometimes it seems as if the second causes were entirely swallowed up in the First Cause. The sacred writers drew no sharp line of demarcation between the divine and the creaturely activity. They did not hesitate to ascribe all natural events to God. "Thou visitest the earth," said the Psalmist, "and waterest it, thou greatly enrichest it; the river of God is full of water; thou providest them corn when thou hast so prepared the earth. Thou waterest her furrows abundantly; thou settlest the ridges thereof; thou makest it soft with showers; thou blessest the springing thereof" (Ps. lxxv. 9, 10). God's immanence merges here into His government, but the former is more prominent. Our Saviour presents the same view. His thought, in describing the operations of nature, is not upon the second causes, but upon the First Cause. God clothes the grass of the field, gives man his daily bread, causes the sun to rise and the rain to fall (Matt. vi. 26-30, vi. 11, v. 45). Even the free acts of men are not put outside the sphere of the divine causality, as a deistical philosophy would fain have them. In the evil choices and acts of men, it is true, the causality is wholly human; the relation of the First Cause to the creaturely cause is here strained to the point of severance. But in the good, though still free, choices and acts of men, God is active. We work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, while God worketh

in us to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. ii. 12, 13).

Now, undoubtedly this truth of God's immanence runs close to pantheism. But, as has been remarked, it gives us the truth, and not the errors, of pantheism. It does not destroy the distinction between God and the creature. The second cause has been so made that God can work through it, but this does not make it either God or a power of God. In our work we grasp and use our instruments from the outside. God has the power to enter His instruments and use them from within. But in both cases they are instruments. The forces of nature are not the power of God, although His power is manifested in and through them. The old definition of the laws of nature, which makes them modes of the divine operation, is correct only if we understand it to refer to the modes of the divine operation through the forces of nature. We may not be able to draw the line of separation between the divine energy and finite energy, but such a separation exists. The one is spiritual; the other is physical. The relation between the two may in a measure be illustrated by the relation between the finite spirit and the body with which it is united. Who can distinguish between mind-energy and brain-energy? Yet who but the materialist doubts that the distinction exists.

It has always been the temptation of Calvinism, in the emphasis which it has laid upon the divine factor in redemption, to push the doctrine of the divine immanence to such an extreme as to reduce second causes to mere manifestations of the First Cause. This tendency reached its culmination in the Hopkinsian theology, which flourished in New England during the last, and the early part of the present, century. We find traces of the doctrine of divine efficiency, as it was called, in the writings of Jonathan Edwards, but it is expressed in its fully developed form in the works of Hopkins and Emmons.

According to this view, God is the efficient cause of all things and events. Dr. Hopkins says, "The immediate exertion of divine power is the proper efficient cause of every event; so that all power is in God, and all creatures which act or move, exist and move, or are moved, in and by Him" (Works, ed. 1852, vol. i., p. 165). Dr. Emons, the daring theologian of Franklin, who did not fear to draw any of the consequences which his logic seemed to require, declared, "To suppose that either angels or men can act independently of God, is to suppose that they themselves are gods." "He exerts his agency in producing all the free and voluntary exercises of every moral agent as constantly and fully as in preserving and supporting his existence" (Works, ed. 1860, vol. ii., p. 454). Thus God was made the author of sin, human freedom was reduced to a mere name, and men, good and bad alike, became puppets in the hands of God.

But the dangers which attend this doctrine of the divine immanence should not blind us to its importance, or drive us into the deistic conception of God's relation to the world. The First Cause is present and active in matter and energy, in vegetable and animal life, in the human soul, in the spiritual life.

3. God's providence reaches its highest exercise in His government. This is His providence in the strictest sense of the term. It is the relation in which God stands to His creatures as their free Disposer. There is, it is true, a sense in which He is free in preservation and immanence, but it is a freedom exercised in maintaining a fixed and unchangeable order, a freedom which has for its effect necessity. Doubtless God could at any moment turn the uniformity of nature into chaos; but it is certain God never would do so. But in His government His freedom does not move along the fixed grooves of an unchangeable order. He attains His great ends by such

means as His wisdom determines, and guides and controls His creatures according to His will.

God thus freely governs the inanimate world. Deism, which regards the universe, when once created, as self-sufficient, protests even more loudly against the divine government in nature than against preservation and immanence. It declares that there is no room in the universe for the free activity of God. All things are governed by law. Finite effects can be produced only by finite causes. The divine interposition, which the doctrine of providential government assumes, is excluded by the scientific conception of the world. If God did thus interpose, there would be evidence of it ; there would be effects which could not be explained by natural causes. But this is not the case. So far as man's observation extends, there is nothing which cannot be accounted for by the operation of natural forces. And yet, in spite of these objections, we claim that God does exercise free control over nature. We claim it upon the authority of revelation. The Scriptures stand or fall with this doctrine. The words of the Psalmist express the invariable teaching of the Bible: "Whatsoever Jehovah pleased, that hath He done, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps" (Ps. cxxxv. 6). We also claim that this doctrine is an essential element of the theistic conception of God. To assert any less than this would be to give God less power in His universe than man possesses. We are able, in virtue of our freedom, to employ the forces of nature in such a way as to bring about our ends. We do it not in opposition to natural law, but in accordance with it. It is by this dominion over material nature, bestowed upon him by God at his creation, that man has built up the wonderful fabric of modern civilization. He thus brings about innumerable effects which nature, left to herself, would never accomplish. And shall God have less control over nature than we? Shall men be able to bring on

a rain by burning a prairie or firing off a quantity of gunpowder, and God not be able to answer His children when in time of drought they cry to Him for rain? I know that it is said that in the case of men the efficient cause is visible; we see the human power working among the natural causes; but in the case of God we see no such evidence of a higher causality. I freely grant that there is a difference, but the difference lies chiefly in the fact that man has a body, and that so we are able to localize the spiritual cause, while God, who is pure Spirit, is hidden from us. But if we admit that the human will, that unseen spiritual power, by setting free an infinitesimal amount of energy in the material substance of the brain, can set in operation a train of physical and material processes which will result in the explosion of a mine, or the starting of complicated machinery a thousand miles away; I do not see what difficulty there is in supposing that the divine Will, by the liberation in any part of the universe of minute quantities of energy, may accomplish the greatest results. It is not possible to give a full physical explanation of any outward effect of the free-will of man. The tests of physics and chemistry do not begin to be delicate enough to take account of the hidden process which takes place in the brain. Why is it impossible that God should produce effects in nature by a similar hiding of His power? It is not through the efficient causation of the will that we know its operations in the case of men, but rather by its final causation, by the rationality of the effects. So, when in the operations of nature we see a rationality which irresistibly directs our thoughts to God, we need not be troubled if we cannot discover just the point at which His Will, working as an efficient cause, set in operation the train of physical causes by which the result has been accomplished. A child's touch can set in motion the avalanche which will overwhelm a whole village. The touch of the divine Will upon an atom might

produce the storms which scattered the Spanish Armada. I can understand how men who deny human freedom may deny the divine government; if they are consistent, they will go further and deny the existence of God Himself. But I do not perceive any rational ground upon which those who hold that there is such a power as free-will in man, can call in question the control of God over nature.

But God's providential government is not confined to the natural world; it extends also to the realm of spirits. God rules in the affairs of men and the higher intelligences. From the nature of the case His government assumes a different character when it has to do with free beings. He respects the freedom which He has made. He lays no compulsion upon the will of His rational creatures. But He rules none the less truly because His government is a moral government. This is what the Bible teaches from one end to the other. "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. iv. 35). His government extends to the free acts of men. "A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps" (Prov. xvi. 9). Christians are "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). He rules in human history. "The kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the ruler over the nations" (Ps. xxii. 28). Even the sinful acts of men are under His control. The evil which Joseph's brethren plot is turned into good (Gen. xlv. 5-8). God causes the wrath of men to praise Him, and restrains the remainder of wrath (Ps. lxxvi. 10). He overrules the sin of the Jews and Pilate for the accomplishment of His purpose of redemption (Acts ii. 23, iv. 27, 28). The influences which are brought to bear are moral. The human will is guided by motives which leave full play for the exercise of freedom. Reward and

punishment play their part. But in one way and another God carries His purposes through, and men do His will either in glad co-operation or in spite of themselves.

II. A number of special problems meet us, as we take the subject of God's providence into more careful consideration.

1. The first concerns the extent of God's providence. The deistic tendency of which mention has been made, when it has been overcome on the open battle-field of the doctrine, entrenches itself, as in a sort of last ditch, in the denial of the universality of God's providence. Cicero voiced this denial in his well-known words, "The gods take care of the great things and disregard the small" ("De Natura Deorum," II. 66). But there can be no question what is required by the teachings of Scripture and the theistic conception of God. His providence is particular as well as general. It extends to the minutiae of His universe as well as to the great operations and events of its administration. Nothing is too small for the infinite God. He numbers the very hairs of our heads (Matt. x. 30). Such care for the least of His creatures, so far from being derogatory to the almighty God, is rather the evidence of His almightiness.

2. Another interesting question relates to the subject of special providence. This is often confounded with God's particular providence, but it is not the same. The particular providence extends to all beings and events. The special providence is God's government when directed to results of especial or extraordinary importance, whether connected with the great interests of His kingdom or the welfare of individual members of it. Special providence is denied on the ground that it implies partiality on the part of God. Now, God is not partial in the sense of being inequitable. He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust (Matt. v. 45). We have reason to believe that

none of His children ever cry to Him in vain. Even in His spiritual dealings with men, though there are some dark problems which we cannot easily solve, we do not doubt that He gives to all, at some time and in some way, all the grace that is needful for salvation. Nevertheless, God does not deal with all alike. His wisdom leads Him to choose the best means by which to attain His great ends, and in so doing He is continually concentrating His providential activity upon certain points. In His work of redemption the interests of the kingdom are of more importance than those of any individual in it, and some individuals are of more importance in relation to the progress of the kingdom than others. So there are occasions in the individual life when God's providence becomes peculiarly manifest, as in its great crises and deliverances. The Bible is full of such special providences. Its fundamental doctrine of election by which the individual is chosen by God and fitted for especial work in His kingdom, is pre-eminently a doctrine of special providence.

3. Again, the question is asked, Is there such a thing as chance? The view of God's providential government which has been taken, and which I verily believe to be the scriptural view, leads us to reply without hesitation in the negative. When we look at the events of the world about us from the lower side, leaving out of view God's relation to them, we may legitimately speak of chance, though even here physical science comes in with its teachings respecting the universality of law, and bids us remember that we use the word in a very limited sense. But in the higher sphere we may use the word only as expressive of our ignorance of the divine purpose. Here, to borrow Pope's phrase in the "Essay on Man," all chance is direction which we cannot see. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 33).

4. Once more, our subject brings before us the re-

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lation of God's providential government to prayer. Here also we must avoid the deistical tendency which conceives of God as unable to take any active part in the ongoings of His world. Such a view makes prayer a mere form, or, as Bushnell says, "a kind of dumbbell exercise, good as exercise, but never to be answered" ("Nature and the Supernatural," p. 452). The Bible doctrine of prayer implies such a providence as that which we have been considering. It is an asking for things which God alone can give, and which He does give in answer to our petitions. The Bible saints prayed for food and raiment and rain, and victory over their enemies, and help in their daily life, as well as for the blessings which are distinctively spiritual. They believed that God had control of nature and of man, and that He disposed of events so as to bring about results which would not have been brought about except for their prayers. Thanksgiving, adoration, confession had a part in those Bible prayers, but everything converges in the request for definite blessings. Now, if the doctrine of God's providence which I have presented is true, if God freely controls the realms of nature and man, and if in this there is nothing inconsistent with the teachings of physical science truly so called, I see no reason why we should not hold as genuine and comprehensive a doctrine of prayer to-day. Only let us guard against the other extreme, which gives man the power through prayer to dictate to the Almighty what He shall do and not do. God's freedom and power as the Governor of the universe are guided by wisdom and love. (Because He *can* give us all that we ask, it does not follow that He *will*.) The decision lies not with us, but with Him. He has encouraged us to come to Him in all our needs, temporal and spiritual, addressing Him as "Our Father." But in our ignorance we shall inevitably ask for many things which are not best as regards the interests of His kingdom, and therefore not best for us. The right of petition is freely given

us. The right of decision belongs to Him. Our prayer should always have the proviso, "Thy will be done!" The notion that if we have a sufficient amount of faith we can carry the will of God by storm, is most unscriptural and pernicious. But we should come to Him with the full persuasion that He is able to give, and that He will give all that it is wise for us to have, and that He is "a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." He may not see fit to give what we ask, but He will always bestow His blessing.

5. The most serious of all these problems is that which concerns the relation of God's providence to sin. But I shall refer to the subject here only very briefly, because we have already encountered its difficulties in discussing the divine plan. Providence is simply the execution of a part of the plan in time, and stands in the same relation to sin as did the plan itself. Unquestionably we must admit that the divine providence extends to all the sinful acts of men. God has brought the sinner into the world and keeps him here in spite of his sin. The environment in which he is placed with its mingled good and evil is due to the wise arrangement of God. God supplies the conditions by which the choice out of which the sin comes is made possible. But while all this is true, the authorship of sin, and the responsibility for it, belong to the man himself. In no sense is God the author of sin. He hates it and is always working against it. The fact that for wise reasons He has permitted the present amount of sin is in no way opposed to His perfect love and holiness. He has provided for its removal by redemption and for its restraint by punishment. In the end He will turn it against itself and make it subservient to the establishment of His kingdom.

III. As we concluded our consideration of the doctrine of creation by an examination of its distinctively Christian aspects, so we may do in the case of the doctrine before

us. A theistic natural theology and the Christian theology which the Bible makes known to us contain a common doctrine of providence, so far as the more general features are concerned, but the redemptive revelation adds some new and higher facts.

1. The chief end of providence is the establishment of the kingdom of God or the redemption of mankind. This furnishes us with the key to all the divine operations in nature and in the human sphere. This is the fact which brings into unity all these varied and complicated operations. All that God does, whether in the realm of nature or in that of grace, is a means to this great end. What to us seems dark and meaningless is so only because we do not perceive its connection with the establishment of the kingdom. 'The darkness is in us, not in God's providence. If we could see things in their true relations, all would be light. Slow is the process by which the infinite Wisdom attains its results, but it is very sure. Nothing is in vain. The operations of nature, the events of human history, the vicissitudes of individual human experience, all co-operate under the divine guidance to bring about the high consummation. How beautifully are we taught this truth by the Bible, that handbook of the divine providence! We call its annals of the Hebrew nation and the early Christian church sacred history, not because it was intrinsically more sacred than the history of our own times, but because the sacredness of it is made manifest. The veil is lifted and the divine background is revealed. We see each event, whether in the fortunes of nations or of individual men, standing in its true relation to God and His work of redemption. The lesson is that there is such a relation in all ages. When Christians come to realize the full meaning of God's providence in its relation to the establishment of His kingdom, history will be written after a new method. The Bible will give the pattern. The historian will be a prophet. It will be his business

to interpret the divine providence, and show how all the events and movements and changes of each age are connected with the fulfilment of God's purpose of grace. Just here also lies the test of individual faith. We need to learn the full application of those deep words of Paul, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. viii. 28). It is because the believer is a member of God's kingdom, identified with it, God's worker in it, that nothing but good can befall him. For if all God's providence aims at the promotion of the kingdom, and the Christian is a constituent element in the kingdom, then, from the nature of the case, his good must be promoted by all things. "God is for him, and who can be against him? Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate him from the love of God (Rom. viii. 31, 38, 39).

2. Providence belongs to each of the three Persons in the blessed Trinity. With respect to each of the three, revelation gives us a distinct and characteristic element of the doctrine we are discussing.

Providence originates with God as Father, and the Bible has given us a doctrine of providence which is rooted in the Fatherhood of God. The ethnic religions have their glimpses of a beneficent providence. Zeus, the head of the Greek Pantheon, is even called the Father. But it was reserved for the Christian revelation, and particularly for Jesus Christ himself, to disclose the truth that in all His acts and ways the God of providence is the Father of His creatures. The hand which rules the universe is guided by love. Behind every dark event, yea in it, is the Father's gracious power.

The agent of providence is the divine Son. The preserving providence of God belongs especially to him.

"In him all things consist" (Col. i. 17). He upholds all things by the word of his power (Heb. i. 3). "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John i. 4). The providential government of the world belongs also to him. But the chief and most notable Christian addition to the doctrine of providence relates to the risen Christ. The incarnation brought mankind into a new relation to God. Since the Saviour has ascended to God's right hand, the Godman sits upon the throne of the universe, and there is a true sense in which man rules the world in his person. For the purpose of completing the redemptive work and establishing the kingdom, all authority has been given him in heaven and on earth. To him has been committed the providence of God. Until the work is done, the holy manhood of the Christ will thus participate in all the operations of providence. It is Jesus Christ who is guiding the destinies of the universe. As the King of the kingdom he is also the Lord of providence. "He must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." "And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 25, 28).

It is through the Holy Spirit that God's providence is accomplished. Wherever the Creator comes into contact with the creature, it is through the Spirit. He is the principle of the divine immanence, the indwelling God. He is the omnipresent energy of God. By His free movement and operation in the world the divine government is accomplished. Through Him God acts upon the hearts of men. He touches the conscience and influences the will. But more particularly, He carries out God's providential work in redemption. He comes to men as the Spirit of the risen Christ, with all the power of His redemptive grace, and brings the divine influences to bear upon their souls. Then, when the soul is brought to

Christ and born again, He is an indwelling providence, shaping it into accordance with the image of Christ, and inspiring it for every good word and work.

We thus complete our examination of the Christian doctrine of providence. We have distinguished the theistic conception of providence from that deistical view of God's relation to the world which to all intents and purposes excludes Him from His own creation. We have considered in detail each of the three great factors in the divine providence—preservation, immanence, and government. The more important problems connected with the doctrine have been examined. Finally, the distinctively Christian elements have been brought before us. It is one of the most important doctrines of the Christian system. Well for us, if we can apprehend it, and believe it, and apply it to our own lives.

XVI.

MAN*

"WHAT is man?" The Psalmist's question is asked anew in every age by every thoughtful soul. On every side of us are mysteries. God and the world are enigmas to which we can give only scanty solution. But man is in many respects the greatest mystery of all. He is, as Augustin has said (*Confessions*, Bk. iv., ch. 14), "a great deep," which we cannot fathom. What is this I, this thinking, willing, feeling Self, that strives and loves and sins and dies? What is this race of men about me, this seething current of souls like mine, moving onward incessantly from the cradle to the grave? An *Œdipus* was found to answer the Sphinx's riddle. The creature which, being born four-footed, afterward becomes two-footed, and then three-footed, is Man, the creeping infant, the vigorous youth and adult, the aged pilgrim leaning on his staff. But who can answer that harder riddle, What is man? What *Œdipus* will slay the Sphinx who asks it and give us rest from her persecutions?

One satisfactory answer has been given, and only one. It is that of the Bible. It seems to me that, as the centuries pass, we do not advance a single step beyond it. Human science and philosophy have told us much about man. They give us his place in the scale of being, they describe his animal functions and analyze his mental powers, they trace his history and his achievements, they throw some light upon his probable future. But what man is they do not tell us. The Bible, on the contrary,

* This subject is also treated by the author in an article entitled "The Christian Conception of Man," in the *Andover Review*, vol. i., p. 465.

does tell us. It takes us up to a higher point of view, and shows us man in his relation to God. It throws upon him the light of heaven and eternity, and in that light it treats of his origin, his nature, his history, and his destiny. And lo, what we seek has been found; the riddle has been solved.

As we pass from the doctrine of God to that of man, I hope we shall be able to maintain this Bible standpoint. It is a fault of our treatises on theology that their anthropology, or doctrine of man, is largely developed from the lower side, and that it involves us in questions of human science and philosophy without disclosing the higher truth which we are striving to reach. Theology is the science of God. It is concerned with the world and man only in their relation to God. Let our anthropology be at the same time divinity. The secret of man is to be found in God.

I. We begin by asking concerning the chief end of man. The answer which comes most readily to our minds is that of the Assembly's Catechism, couched in a phrase so apt as almost to make us believe in the continuance of inspiration, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." It will not be from any lack of reverence for these time-honored words, that I shall give another answer, but that our statements here may correspond with those already made. Indeed, the difference between the two answers will be only in form. We have seen that the chief end of God in His eternal plan was the establishment of His kingdom or redemption. This also was His great object in creation, as it is in His providence. Now, the chief end of God's plan and work is the chief end of man's being. He exists for the kingdom of God or for redemption. He freely carries out this purpose of his creation, when he obeys the Saviour's injunction and seeks "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. vi. 33). This is the hidden treas-

ure, the pearl of great price, compared with which all other objects of human life and effort sink into insignificance (Matt. xiii. 44-46).

This destination of man for redemption or the kingdom of God implies a number of more specific facts. The first of these is the existence of sin. Our discussion of the divine plan, as well as of the doctrines of creation and providence, has prepared us for the acceptance of this fact. God has always known that man would abuse his freedom. From the first He intended to permit sin to exist, that He might overrule it for a greater good. Redemption, which is conditioned upon sin, was as much a part of the plan as creation and providence. Redemption was not an after-thought on God's part; it was a forethought. The only kingdom which God contemplated, so far as this world was concerned, was a kingdom that was to be established by redemption. Man's chief end is, therefore, the chief end of a sinner, and to be attained only by salvation. But this does not imply that sin is an essential element in the idea of man. On the contrary, it is a divergence from the true idea of man, resulting from the misuse of freedom, which God has indeed for wise reasons permitted, but neither approved nor efficiently brought about. In his true idea man is holy, and the whole aim of the divine working in redemption is to destroy his sin and make him holy.

The doctrine of man's chief end, accordingly, implies that he was made to love and obey God. This is the meaning of the kingdom: it is the state of things in which God's will is perfectly done and the command obeyed, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind." The kingdom comes just in so far as this result is reached. Redemption is at once the process by which the result is reached and the result itself. Sin is the abnormal fact in man. It is what ought not to

be. The recognition of it which is implied in the chief end, as it has been stated, is wholly *de facto* and in no respect *de jure*. God has permitted it only that He might destroy it. The normal man is the heavenly man, washed in the Saviour's blood, made perfectly clean and holy, purged from all selfishness, in whose heart burns ever the pure flame of perfect love.

Again, man's destination for the kingdom or redemption implies that he was made for communion and fellowship of God. He was not meant to be an independent being, living in his own strength and for his own purposes. When the sky shuts him in and he lives for material things, and has no personal knowledge of God and intercourse with Him, the world with all its beauty is a prison-vault and man falls short of his true being. As Augustin says, "Thou, O God, hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Thee!" (Confessions, Bk. I., ch. 1). "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John xvii. 3). With God is the fountain of life. Fellowship with Him is the proper state of man in this world, and it carries with it the certainty of the unending blessedness in the other world. Because man is made for the kingdom, he is made for heaven.

Moreover, man as made for the kingdom was made for Jesus Christ, the King of the kingdom, the Redeemer of mankind. He is the Head of mankind, the Son of Man. He died for all men. He has raised mankind in his own person from earth to heaven. He is the source of all spiritual blessings. The work of the kingdom is his work. He lays rightful claim upon the obedience of all men. To die is to be with him. He is the glory and the blessedness of the heavenly state. In his coming, human history is to culminate. He is to call the dead from their graves and to judge men and angels. In the

final state he will be the Husband of the mystic Bride his church.

Once more, the chief end of man is the chief end not merely of individuals, but of mankind. There is an ideal of manhood in the race toward which human history moves, and which is to be attained by redemption. Men were not made to live in isolation, but to form a holy society, a temple for the indwelling of God. The idea of the kingdom involves union and organization. There is to be not only love to God but love to men—sonship and brotherhood. The kingdom is realized in this world just in so far as men are brought into their true relations to each other. In the consummation all men are to be united into one under Christ the Head, and the church is to be coextensive with mankind. The individual attains his true end only in connection with his fellow-men, as he lives among them and labors for them in love. In common with all the children of God the world over, his aim is to build up the kingdom, employing for this end the divinely ordained institutions of the church, the family, the state, and those other instrumentalities by which God realizes the purpose of His kingdom.

Finally, the destination of man for the kingdom implies his dominion over the natural world, material and sentient. The world does not in its own right belong to the kingdom. Man is the medium through which it is brought into connection with God's great purpose. It was meant that man should be at once the lord and the high-priest of nature. Human sin has brought the creation under the bondage of corruption, and made man a servant where he should be a master. But redemption will even here restore what has been lost; "the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. viii. 21), and man shall recover his rightful dominion.

II. We ask next, What are the peculiar characteristics

of man, which fit him for the high end of his existence? We are thus brought to the scriptural account of man's creation and the other teachings of the Bible respecting man's nature.

There are two narratives in Genesis of the creation of Adam, one in the first chapter, the other in the second, the latter supplemented by the account of the origin of woman. The first is a part of the great history of the world's creation. Man is represented as the highest and greatest of God's works, created at the close of the sixth day, made in God's image, appointed to dominion over the lower orders, and pronounced "very good." The second account, which is the composition of another writer, the so-called Jehovist, describes the method of Adam's creation. "The Lord God," we are told, "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. ii. 7). Then follows the narrative of the creation of woman, who was miraculously produced from the body of the man.

If now we look more carefully at these two records of creation, the peculiarity of man's nature and his difference from the other orders of being become evident. Let us look first at the account of the second chapter. Here that which distinguishes man from the lower orders of animate beings is not that he was made from the dust of the earth; the bodies of the animals have the same origin (Gen. i. 24, ii. 19). The distinction does not lie in the fact that man has in his nostrils the breath of life; the same is true of the animal (Gen. vii. 22). It does not consist in the fact that man was a living soul; for the animal also is a living soul (Gen. i. 24, Hebrew). There is, however, a distinction, and a very marked one. It consists in the immediate divine efficiency, which the account so strongly emphasizes. Man does not become a "living soul" until the Lord God has Himself breathed

into his nostrils the breath of life. Man is an animal and made like the other animals, with this great exception, that his distinctive principle is the result of an especial divine inbreathing. In virtue of this he is not a mere animal, but a "being breathing thoughtful breath." There is in him a higher life than that of the animal.

The account of the first chapter describes the same peculiarity of man by saying that he was made in God's image, after His likeness (Gen. i. 26). The best modern exegesis finds no difference between the two terms, image and likeness, except that the latter is explanatory of the former. Man's distinction lies in the fact that he was made like God. We, therefore, ask, in what respects is he like God? In what does the divine image consist?

{ There are three methods by which we may answer this question—by examining the later biblical teachings respecting the nature of man, by comparing him with the animal and determining the points in which they differ, and by comparing him with God and thus discovering the respects in which they agree. These three methods of approach will all lead us to the same result. Let us examine them in reverse order.

Our argument for the divine existence was based upon the truth that man is like God. We looked into our own souls, and taking their highest qualities and powers, freed them in our thought from all the imperfection which belongs to our finite and sinful natures, and ascribed them to the Infinite Being. "The descent into our own souls is the ascent to God." Now we have to reverse the process. We have by the aid of revelation reached a much higher conception of God than natural theology could give us. Those qualities and powers in which we resemble God are His image in us. Of course we are not like Him in His infinitude. Neither are we like Him in His holiness, though the first man before the fall was like Him in this respect in a sense in which we cannot be. Nor are we like

Him in possessing a bodily or animal nature. The likeness lies in the fact that both God and man are spirits, possessing the attributes of personality, freedom, rationality, moral powers, and the capacity of love. Man is like God a personal being. He knows himself as an I, the permanent, indivisible subject of all his powers and activities. His consciousness is *self*-consciousness. He is a rational being, who knows what he is and where he is, who looks before and after, who knows the Infinite and Eternal, who has an intuitive knowledge of the true, the beautiful, and the good. He is a free being, who possesses that sovereign capacity, the power of choice. And when I speak of freedom, I do not mean what the theological and philosophical determinists of our time call by that name, that spontaneity which man possesses in common with the animal. I mean freedom in the true sense of the word, the ability to choose between opposite courses, the power by which character is formed and which, when rightly used, can bring men into that higher freedom which consists in the perfect conformity of the will to the law of right, "the liberty of the sons of God." Man also is a moral being. As free he is under law, and this law, which is the expression of the holy nature of God, belongs to his own nature in its true idea. God and man have the same chief end, the establishment of the divine kingdom. Conscience is the never-failing witness of the divine law and of the righteous authority of Him in whose image we have been made. Lastly, man is like God in that he is capable of those relations and that attitude of will which constitute love. As God in His inmost nature is love, so man is love, in ideal if not in actuality. Love is consonant to his nature. Only when he loves God with all his heart and his neighbor like himself, does he attain the completeness of the divine image. It is in this sense that man is a religious being. He is made for love to God and that love of God which is bestowed

upon all who stand in fellowship and communion with Him.

We reach the same result when we examine the characteristics in which man differs from the animal. Man is personal; the animal is impersonal. Man has self-consciousness; the animal has consciousness, but does not know itself as a self. Man is rational; the brute is irrational, as the Bible says, "it has no understanding" (Ps. xxxii. 9). Man is free, impulses and motives influence him, but do not control him; the animal is under necessity, its impulses are its masters. Man is a moral being, under law which he has power to obey or disobey; the animal is not moral, he knows nothing of the law of his being, God works in it to will and to do of His good pleasure, but it has no power to work out its destiny by a free and conscious co-operation with God. Man is capable of love; the animal has natural affections which are prophetic of the higher exercises of man, but which are quite distinct from love. Man is a religious being; the animal stands in no conscious relation to God.

The third method of determining the nature of the divine image in man is to examine the scriptural teachings respecting his peculiar characteristics. We must make allowance here for the fact that the Bible deals chiefly with man as fallen. But we shall have no trouble in recognizing the great outlines of Biblical doctrine on this subject. The Bible teaches that man is a spirit, a personal being, rational, free, moral, made for love. These are the attributes of humanity which make him the proper object of God's redemptive grace, and which are to attain their ideal completeness in the heavenly state. The conception of man which is most prominent in the Scriptures, and which most truly indicates his likeness to God, is that expressed by the term *sonship*. God is the Father of all men, the heavenly Father (Matt. chh. v.-vii.). Paul, preaching to the heathen Athenians, ap-

appropriates the words of the Greek poet Aratus, "We are also his offspring" (Acts xvii. 29). Luke calls Adam the "son of God" (iii. 38). The common designation of the Christian, who by God's grace has begun to realize in himself the true idea of manhood, is a son or child of God. Now, sonship, like the image, implies likeness to God. The son is of the same nature with his parent, possessed of the same powers, following the same aims. He is under the parent's law, which is the common law of the household. He stands in intercourse and communion with his father. His true relation to the parent is one of love, the love of both. It is one thing to be a *work* of God, like the animal or the material thing; it is very different to be a *son* of God.

We have thus come along these three lines of approach to the same result. The image of God in man, by which he is fitted for his chief end, consists in his spiritual being, his free rational and moral personality, created in love and for love.

III. In what has been said thus far, I have implied that man continues even in his fallen state to possess the divine image. But it is time that I should to some extent qualify my statements. Upon this point there is a wide divergence among the theologians. Some, like the Greek and Latin Fathers, have distinguished between the image and the likeness, the former consisting in man's rational nature and the latter in his moral perfection; the likeness has been lost by the Fall and only the image retained. Others, like our New England theologians, have held that the image consisted in the moral perfection and that sin has destroyed it. The truer statement is that the image has been retained, though marred and defaced by sin. But before this question can be discussed, we must consider another more fundamental matter. The image of God in man differs from its archetype in God in that it is at first an image only partially realized. The

image is a germ which is capable of development and which God meant should develop. There is a natural basis and the potency and promise of a complete achievement. The divine nature is eternally perfect. There is no development in God. His nature and His character are eternally the same. Not so man. The divine image given him at the start is an outline which he is to fill up. He is made for growth. He is to form his own character. He is to build upon the basis of his natural likeness to God a spiritual likeness, wrought out by his own free will through the freely imparted grace of God. His natural sonship is to become by his own free choice and the power of God's Spirit a holy spiritual sonship. We must therefore distinguish between the image as original endowment and the image as destination. The two are not distinct and separable. They are different aspects of the same organism, different stages in its growth.

Now, we cannot doubt that man has retained the divine image since the Fall. The Bible distinctly so declares (Gen. v. 1, 3, ix. 6; 1 Cor. xi. 7; James iii. 9). Sonship, which is equivalent to the image, remains, and God is the heavenly Father even after men have ceased to recognize Him as such. Nevertheless sin has come in to disturb the development of the image. Instead of becoming like to God in the free directions of their wills to His service, men have turned from Him into self-service. Accordingly, not only has the growth been checked and perverted, but the natural basis of the growth has been affected. Man possesses the same godlike nature and powers which God gave him at first, but they do not retain their primitive efficiency. There is, therefore, a true sense in which we must say that the divine image in us has been defaced. For this reason there is need of redemption, and redemption will accomplish a twofold work: it will restore the image to its pristine beauty and perfectness, and carry forward its development to its com-

pletion. This is what is implied in those New Testament passages which represent it as the work of God in Christ to form the divine image in us. There is a "new man which after God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 24). It is this new man, "which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. iii. 10).

IV. I pass to speak of the relation in which Christ stands to the divine image in man. Attention has already been called to the fact that man was made for Christ, the King of the divine kingdom, the Redeemer of mankind. But man was not only made *for* Christ; he was made *by* him. The eternal Logos, who became incarnate, was the Creator of man, as he was the Creator of the world. Moreover, he was in his eternal Sonship in a peculiar sense the archetype of man. The Logos is in his infinite and eternal Person the image of God. Paul says that he is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15). In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are told that he is the very image of God's substance (i. 3). The created image of God in man is the finite reproduction of the uncreated image of God in the Logos. That Sonship which belongs to the inmost essence of the Deity is mirrored in the sonship which belongs to the nature of man, and which reaches its full realization in redemption.

But even thus we do not exhaust the relation of Christ to the divine image in man. The Godman in his humanity is called in the New Testament the image of God (2 Cor. iv. 4). He could say to his disciples, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). In the incarnation the uncreated image and the created image met in perfect union, as perfect seal and perfect impression. The eternal Son wrought out in humanity a perfect human sonship, so that the Christ is God's Son both in his divinity and his humanity. The divine image in the human Christ was perfect in its beginnings, as in Adam, and

it was made perfect in the completeness of a holy development. Accordingly, in Christ we have the ideal of humanity realized in all its fulness. He is the one perfect specimen of the human race. He has shown us what man can be, and what by God's grace he is yet to be. Sin has made all other men imperfect specimens of humanity. Were it not for Jesus Christ we might well despair of anything better. But the Second Adam has proved to us that our ideal is not a mere imagination. Thus he is our pattern. Thus the blessed hope which redemption sets before us is that we shall be conformed to the image of Christ, and just so far as redemption does its work in us, this hope is realized. "Whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 49). "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (1 John iii. 2). This future conformation to the image of Christ is anticipated by God in His justification of the sinner. He sees in him not the distorted image of God which sin has so sadly marred, but the perfect image of the Saviour with whom he is united by faith, that image which is finally to be realized in all its completeness, and for the sake of the Saviour and his work accepts him in the fullest sense as His child.

V. There are several important questions touching the relation of theology to philosophy and physical science, which are brought to our notice by the doctrine we are discussing, and which it would not be right to pass in entire silence.

1. The first concerns the elements of which man is composed. Does revelation give any sanction to materialism? and if not, does it tell us whether man's nature is twofold or threefold, a dichotomy or a trichotomy? Now, there is no reason to believe that the Bible was intended to teach

philosophy and science. We have seen this to be true when dealing with the subject of the world's creation, and there is no ground for introducing another principle here. The attempt to extract from the scriptures an inspired psychology is mere folly. The conceptions of human nature found in the Bible are the popular conceptions of the various ages in which the scriptural books were written. Doubtless a new content was put into these conceptions, so far as the spiritual truth which revelation has to teach came into contact with them. But more than this we cannot expect. Nevertheless, it is not too much to say that the scriptural doctrine of man excludes certain philosophical doctrines. As between the materialistic and spiritualistic theories of man, the Bible is far from being neutral. It unequivocally teaches the existence of a higher, spiritual principle in man. He is not merely a material being, but a being in whom a higher life is present. In his ideal, man is a unity, body and spirit in closest union. Death, the consequence of sin, breaks this unity for the time; but in the resurrection it is to be restored. Between death and the resurrection the spirit is separated from the body. There is a doctrine which has in late years acquired some prevalence in the Christian church, and which is based upon a materialistic philosophy. I refer to the theory of "conditional immortality," which in the form commonly held asserts the non-existence of the soul between death and the judgment. It finds a certain support in the teachings of some of the Old Testament writers, though a careful study of the passages shows that it is without satisfactory foundation. It gains a specious appearance of truth by the device of interpreting the New Testament according to the principles and definitions which it claims to find in the Old. But its best refutation is to be found in the violence which it does to all sober and honest exegesis. I shall speak of this theory again when we come to eschatology. It has served the

one good purpose of showing that materialism is irreconcilable with the teachings of revelation. Indeed, consistently carried out, it leads to the subversion of revelation itself and the denial of the divine existence.

The question respecting the number of constituent elements in man is more difficult, but far less important. The Bible terms are used with great latitude. Such words as body, flesh, soul, heart, spirit have a well-recognized central core of meaning, but shade off into an indefinite penumbra of different significations. The most that can be claimed by the trichotomists, who hold to the threefold division of human nature, namely, into body, soul, and spirit, is that there is in the Bible a general *usus loquendi* favoring their view. Their theory breaks down the moment they attempt to prove a uniform and invariable usage in the Bible. Nothing more seems to be taught than the naïve conception of man as consisting of a body or animal nature animated by a higher spiritual principle. The one man may be designated from either side of his being, as flesh or spirit, or with reference to the union of the two, as soul. In the New Testament somewhat sharper distinctions are drawn, and there is an approximation to our distinction between body and soul as two distinct and separable entities; but even here the language is popular and not philosophical.

2. What, now, shall we say of the relation of the theory of evolution to the scriptural doctrine of man? The Bible gives a detailed account of man's creation; the theory of evolution denies creation and puts derivation by descent through the operation of natural selection in its stead. The Bible attributes to man a nature and powers different from those of the animal, not only in degree but in kind; evolution explains man's nature and powers as developed from those of the animal. The Bible excludes materialism; the theory of evolution seems to require it. Now, with all liberality toward the doctrine of evolution—

and I have enough to believe that it contains a vast amount of truth and is applicable to extensive tracts of nature—I do not think that that form of it which finds in natural selection the full explanation of man is consistent with the teachings of the Bible. I may be wrong in this statement, and would speak modestly upon the subject. I should not wish to stake the truth of Christianity upon the decision one way or another of a point like this. But it does seem to me that the Bible, both in the accounts of man's creation and in the later teachings respecting man's nature, attributes to him something which differs heaven-wide from anything we find in nature, and the origin of which cannot be explained by the operation of the forces and laws in the spheres below man. Personality, self-consciousness, rationality, freedom, conscience, the religious nature, have some prophetic anticipations in the lower orders, but they are in principle new. There is a gap between the highest animal and the lowest man which the theory of evolution is utterly incapable of bridging over.

But there is a more modest application of evolution to man with respect to which the theologian's attitude is very different. It is that which is made by such men as Wallace, who discovered the law of natural selection contemporaneously with Darwin, by Mivart, the Roman Catholic scientist, and by our own distinguished countryman, Professor Dana. According to this view, man's lower nature is the result of evolution by descent from the animals, but his higher spiritual principle is due to a creative act of God, supplementing the evolution by second causes. This form of the theory may be true or untrue, but there is nothing in the Bible to contradict it. Indeed, the account of the creation in the second chapter of Genesis almost seems framed to admit it: "God made man out of the dust of the ground"—there is the evolution, and the divine making is by providence rather

than by creation. "And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life"—there is the creative act, the introduction of the higher principle. "And man became a living soul"—there is the starting-point for the progress of the race. But I will not say that the writer of this wonderful story meant to leave the way open for any theory of science; he had higher ends in view. All that need be said is, that the way was left open. It is a matter of small importance to us whether or not we are derived on our lower side from the animals. However that may be, we belong on that side to nature. We share one great department of our being with the animals, the vegetables, and the inorganic world. We are dependent for our bodily, and so indirectly for our spiritual, life upon the world below. Every day I am doing what I can, as I eat my necessary food, to build up my body out of the flesh of animals and the tissues of vegetables; and why should I be so nice as to shrink from the thought that my ancestor a thousand times removed was, as Darwin has described him, "a hairy quadruped, furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in its habits, and an inhabitant of the Old World?" ("Descent of Man," vol. ii., p. 372). There is nothing degrading to us in such a connection with the animal world. The lower orders are as God made them, good for their purpose and free from moral evil. All that man has to be ashamed of is his own sin and its consequences. In view of this he might well hide his face before God's unfallen creatures, however humble in the scale of being. When he shall be redeemed, he will be glad to own his relationship to the dumb creatures which God has given him to rule over, and to be their mouth-piece to praise the great Father who has made them and him.

3. Another interesting, and in many respects important, question relates to the common origin of man. The accounts of creation in Genesis seem to teach that the race

has descended from a single pair. There are also a number of passages occurring later on in the Bible, which teach the same view (Gen. vi. 7, 8, vii. 21, viii. 1 seq.; Acts xvii. 26). The scriptural doctrines of the universal sinfulness of man and of redemption by Christ are based upon the assumption of the common origin of the human race. This is the teaching of Paul in the epistles to the Romans and the Corinthians, in which he contrasts the first and the second Adams (Rom. v. 12 seq.; 1 Cor. xv. 22). Here again we should be cautious about resting the weight of the question respecting the truth of revelation upon the solution of such a problem as this. Christian men, like Agassiz, have maintained the plural origin of mankind, and yet have held to all the essential truths of the scriptural system. At the present time, however, there can scarcely be said to be a conflict upon this point. Modern science agrees with the Bible in teaching the common origin of the race. Anatomy and physiology teach the specific unity of man. Ethnology points to one original fountain-head, probably in Central Asia, from which all the streams of human emigration have flowed. The science of religion discloses common traditions and mythologies. The science of language exhibits a convergence toward a common center of the various languages of mankind. Finally, the theory of evolution speaks through Professor Huxley in favor of the monogenistic view: "I am one of those," he says, "who believe that at present there is no evidence whatever for saying that mankind sprang originally from any more than a single pair" ("Origin of Species," Lecture V.).

4. Finally, the question arises respecting the origin of the individual soul. Three theories have been held. The first, and the one which has had the widest currency, is that which ascribes each soul to a distinct creative act of God. Another, which bears the name of Traducianism, maintains that the germ of the soul is passed from parent

to child at the same time with the germ of the body, and after a similar manner. Still another view, which was held by Origen in the third century and can count a few distinguished modern theologians in its favor, claims for the soul a pre-existent state in another world before it entered upon the experiences of this life; according to it,

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.”

But revelation is wisely silent upon this subject. We are at perfect liberty, so far as its teachings are concerned, to hold whichever of the three theories most commends itself to our reason. Probably the majority of Christians will always favor some form of the first-mentioned view, or Creationism, as it is commonly called. Even though they may be willing to admit that there is no such creative activity as produced the first man, still they will prefer to believe that the divine power is active in the origin of each new spirit in a more special way than when other things come into existence. We cannot but believe that there is in each human being something altogether new, that as each man's life is “a plan of God,” so each man himself possesses a special divine endowment springing from a special divine originative act, which we can only designate by the term creative.

As man is the highest and noblest of earthly creatures, so his creation fitly finishes the symphony of creation, “the diapason closing full in man.” What honor God has bestowed upon him and what love! What meaning there is in those words, “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son” (John iii. 16).

Thus far, while recognizing the existence of sin, we have dwelt chiefly upon the ideal aspects of man's nature. In our next chapter we shall pass to the consideration of that abuse of freedom which has wrought such havoc in God's fair creation.

XVII.

THE NATURE AND GUILT OF SIN

THE guiding principle of our discussions thus far has been the doctrine of the redemptive kingdom of God. This doctrine, as we have had repeated occasion to observe, implies the existence of sin in the world. God was not surprised by the entrance of sin ; it was not forced against His will into the sphere of His moral government. He intentionally permitted it, because He meant to turn it against itself and make it subservient to His grace. We have now reached the point where we must give especial attention to this subject of sin, and we shall still find in the doctrine of the redemptive kingdom the clew to guide us through its intricacies. I am anxious that we should avoid the mistake, into which theologians have too often fallen, of treating sin merely in its philosophical aspects or as a fact of natural theology. There is no truth in the theological system which has a more distinctively Christian character. It finds no adequate expression outside of Christianity. Sin has darkened the soul in nothing more than in the knowledge of itself. The fact, it is true, is patent. All religions, all philosophies recognize the existence of moral evil. But we seek to know something more of it than the mere fact of its existence, and it is not until we view it in the light which the Christian revelation has thrown upon it and see its relation to God's kingdom, that we discover its true nature and meaning.

I. Standing, then, upon the vantage-ground of the redemptive revelation, we ask, What is sin ? The answer

may be given in few words. It is *the deviation of man's will from his chief end*. In the last chapter we had the subject of the chief end brought clearly before us. The great end of God's purpose and actions is the final object of man's existence. He was made for the kingdom of God. He fulfils the divine intention in creating him when he "seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." It is his duty as a rational being, possessed of moral knowledge and freedom, to set this chief end always before him and to pursue it constantly and un-deviatingly. The way to the attainment of his proper end is a straight path turning neither to the right nor to the left. Now, so far as the human will does not follow this path, so far as it turns to either side in its choices and volitions, it sins. It is interesting to notice that the Hebrew word most frequently employed in the Old Testament to convey the idea of sin, and its Greek counterpart in the New Testament, both signify to miss the mark ; sin is wrong aiming of the choice and a wrong direction of the act.

This general definition of sin may be further explained, if we consider the subject from two different points of view, negatively and positively, in what it is not and what it is.

Viewed negatively, sin is disobedience to the divine will. This is essentially the same as the definition already given. For the kingdom of God is realized wherever the divine will is accomplished. Our Saviour has taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. vi. 10). But when God's will is disobeyed, the kingdom is hindered ; the sinner is not a filial subject of the King, but a rebel. It is the same thing when we say, in the words of the Assembly's Catechism, that "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." The law is the expression of the divine will as the rule of human conduct. In it

God's will lays its righteous demands upon man's will. The chief end and the means by which it is to be attained form the subject-matter of the law. Its great outlines are written upon the heart of every man, and are witnessed by the voice of conscience. Paul has shown in the first two chapters of the Epistle to the Romans that even the heathen have this general knowledge of the law, so that they are "without excuse" in their sin. But the law finds a far fuller exposition in the redemptive revelation. The first efforts of revelation were directed to the deepening in men of the sense of sin, and the divine law is taught more and more fully from the days of Moses onward, till we reach the complete spiritual statement of it in the Sermon on the Mount. The law is the rule by which we measure the moral state of man. Whatever does not conform to it, whatever in any way transgresses it, is sin.

But we must be careful lest this definition of sin lead us into inadequate, and so false, conceptions of its nature. The term law is employed by many in such a sense as to give a very different meaning to it from that which the Bible teaches. It is used impersonally, to designate merely the inherent principle of human conduct. As a force, or a material substance, or an organism, have each their law, that is, their established mode of operation, so has man. Now, let me not be misunderstood. I do not deny that the term law may be rightly used in this sense, or that any deviation from this law is sin. What I affirm is, that the complete meaning of the term will carry us far deeper. Our Saviour, basing his teachings upon the precepts of the Old Testament, summed up the law in the two great commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 37-39). But this exposition of the law carries us above the commandment to the personal God who commands and reveals to us the fact that our true relation

to Him is one of love, that is, one of fellowship and communion, of love on His side, as well as obedience and love on ours. He has made God known to us as our Father, who has crowned us with loving kindness and tender mercies. Moreover, he has revealed to us the divine grace in redemption: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life" (John iii. 16). It is this Father, this God of grace, yea, even it is this Saviour himself, who speaks to us in the law, and who reveals His will by His Spirit and providence, calling us to special services in His kingdom. Here is a present God, to whom that redemptive kingdom which is our chief end is dear above all things, who is bound to us by tenderer ties than our dearest earthly friend. Now, sin is in its deepest meaning the rejection of this God. It is disobedience to our Father, alienation from Him, rejection of that sonship which is ours by birthright. It involves a rupture of the state of communion with God. It means going out of the Father's house and into the far country. In the case of those who know Christ and the grace of redemption which has come to us through him, it means the rejection of this utmost manifestation of love and mercy. In a word, it means all that wrong and wretchedness which Jesus has pictured in that most wonderful of all stories, the parable of the Prodigal Son. I do not mean that one need go so far as the Prodigal did in order to become a sinner. What I assert is that in every sin, be it small or great, this element is present, this rejection of the Father's love, this disobedience to the Father's will. It may even go so far as to become that enmity to God, of which the Apostle speaks in the eighth chapter of Romans (v. 7).

So far we have looked at sin upon the negative side, considering its opposition to the true manhood. But we shall not understand it fully until we have also examined its positive side. Thus considered, sin may be defined as

selfishness. We say it is positive because it does not merely consist in a deviation of the will from the chief end of man, but the setting of a wrong chief end. We were made for the kingdom of God; but it is possible for us to usurp the place that belongs to God and put Self upon the throne. It is our duty to love God supremely; but it is possible to love ourselves supremely. It is just this that every sinner does, just in so far as he sins. He makes himself the center around which his moral life revolves. Instead of following the law of love, which finds its highest blessedness in giving, he follows the law of selfishness, which finds its highest blessedness, or thinks it does, in taking. In saying that sin consists in selfishness, I do not mean to say that all self-love is sin. There is a true love of self which is not only commendable but obligatory. We find it recognized in the command to love our neighbor as ourself. But the true self-love is subordinate to the love of God. It views self as an instrument of God in the establishment of His kingdom. It finds its own chief end in God's chief end. But selfishness puts the love of self before the love of God. It seeks to attain a false independence by going outside of the sphere of the divine kingdom. It puts God second. Herein lies the inherent falsity of sin. It does not gain what it seeks, it does not find the blessedness it promises itself. Selfishness is not really self-love; rightly understood, it is self-hatred. It is a vaulting ambition which o'erreaches itself. For man has only one chief end, and the chief end which sin substitutes does not take its place, but brings only disappointment and sorrow. This is why the Bible so often calls sin folly and the sinner a fool. (A fool is a man who thinks he is getting everything when in reality he is throwing away everything; he gains the whole world and loses his own soul; he is like the foolish dog in the fable, who loses the meat from his mouth as he snaps at the meat of the dog reflected in the water.) In

all sin, be it great or little, there is this selfishness—and this folly.

Before we leave this branch of our subject, I wish briefly to refer to the light thrown upon this question of sin by the person and life of Jesus Christ. In him we have a perfect specimen of holy manhood, and therefore he is the standard by which we may measure other men. Accordingly, Christlikeness is holiness and un-Christlikeness is sin. Whatever in the character and life falls short of "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13) is unholy. When we make the ordinary manhood of the world about us our standard and compare ourselves with each other, we may seem good enough. But when we place our lives alongside of Christ's, the case is different. There is a taint of sin in our best deeds. Even those theologians who teach that some Christians attain perfection in this life, hesitate to declare that it is such a perfection as belonged to the Saviour. In all normal Christian experience increased knowledge of Christ brings a deeper sense of sin, and a more vivid realization of its extent and power.

II. We have next to seek the essential principle of sin. The definitions already given show us what it is. Now we inquire concerning its source. Upon this point a variety of theories have been held by theologians. Some have endeavored to explain the existence of sin by a dualistic theory of the universe. Over against the holy God is a Principle of Evil, to which all sin is to be ascribed. Commonly this view, which found typical expression in the manicheism of the early Christian church, is associated with a doctrine of the intrinsic evil of matter. Sin is therefore incident to this earthly life, in which the soul is entangled in a material body and thus for the time separated from God, its true source and life. But the Bible gives no countenance to such a view as this. God is supreme in His universe. Satan, though powerful

and capable of doing great mischief, is a finite being, created by God and wholly under His control. Matter is not evil, but good ; it becomes evil only as it comes under the influence of sin. Another theory ascribes sin to the sensuous nature of man, that is, his lower or animal nature, the flesh, as distinguished from the spirit. But this explanation also is unsatisfactory. The animal nature is good in itself. When the eternal Word became flesh (John i. 14), and lived a perfect human life in the flesh, he proved that there is nothing intrinsically evil in it. It is true that the sensuous nature of man is the source of many of his sins, but it is also true that the worst sins emanate from the higher nature. The worst villains, the Iagos for example, are free from the sins of the flesh. It is true, too, that Paul ascribes inherent sinfulness to the flesh ; but Paul uses the term not to designate the lower nature of man as it is in itself, but the whole man in so far as he is under the influence of sin. It is not the flesh which is the cause of sin, but sin which has corrupted the flesh, as it has corrupted the whole man. Still another explanation finds the essential principle of sin in the finiteness of man. This view has taken various forms. At present it finds expression in the popular evolutionary philosophy—which, let me say, as I have done before, is always to be carefully distinguished from the more modest scientific theory of evolution. According to this view, sin is a necessary stage in human development. It is partially evolved conduct. It belongs to a period when man is only partially conformed to his environment. There is in it nothing intrinsically evil. It will more and more disappear as the process of evolution goes on. “Paul,” said a witty English clergyman (Dr. Raleigh), “cried out in his deep consciousness of sin, ‘O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!’ Our modern philosophers, with their new ethics, exclaim, boastfully, ‘O progressive creature that I

am, who shall help me to evolve myself!’” But this theory is as incompetent as the other to furnish us with the real principle of sin. Sin is not normal but abnormal. It indicates not progress but retrogression. The natural man becomes no holier in the progress of evolution. Sin becomes in many respects worse as the world grows older. The world as a whole is doubtless far better than it was a thousand years ago, but the civilized sinner who has fallen heir to all the benefits of human evolution is worse than the savage sinner.

There is one explanation, and only one, of the origin of sin which is satisfactory. It is that which ascribes it to the abuse of human freedom. Its essential principle is to be found in the perversion of one of God’s best gifts.

In order that we may understand what this means, let us look more carefully at this subject of freedom. We use the term in several different senses. Thus we say a man is free when no constraint is laid upon him from without. This is what is called freedom of action. It is the kind of freedom of which the slave is deprived and for which he sighs, the freedom for which the prisoner longs, the liberty which the patriot dies to defend. Then there is what is called “real freedom,” or, as the Bible calls it, “the freedom of the sons of God.” This consists in holiness, in conformity to our chief end. The Christian is free, because he is going forward in the path in which he was made to move, while the sinner is a slave because he is subverting his true end and has brought conflict and confusion into his moral life by leaving the path for which he was destined. But when we speak of sin as originating in the abuse of freedom, we use the term in neither of these senses. We mean by it that power of choice which is the characteristic of man as a rational and moral being, and in virtue of which he is able to determine to which of the various ends or objects of action which are presented to him he will direct his energies. The brute is moved

by impulses operating from behind. He has no choice in the true sense of the word. But man sees before him the ends of action. He understands their nature. He has his bearings in the universe, and, as we say, "knows what he is about." There are impulses in him as in the animal, which impel him toward certain ends, but he is able to hold them in check while he deliberates intelligently upon the nature of these ends and chooses between them. The brute is governed by his impulses; the man governs his impulses, or has the power to do it.

In motives which impel men toward action there is an element of impulse, but it is transformed by the presence of a higher rational element. We are not compelled by motives. It is indeed true that no rational action is possible without motives, but the choice from which the action proceeds is made in view of motives and on the ground of them, but not because of them. The efficient cause of choice is not the motive but the free man himself. Determinism denies this. It says that the motives are the efficient causes of action. The difference between the man and the brute, according to the determinist, is that the man has reason and conscience while the brute has neither, but otherwise their action is the same. Determinism uses the word freedom, but means by it merely freedom of action, not freedom of choice. Jonathan Edwards asks, whether it is not freedom enough to be able to do as we please? Dr. Nathaniel Taylor, who taught the freedom of the will in the full meaning of the term, replied, No—in order to be free, a man must be able not only to do as he pleases but to do as he doesn't please. The beast does as he pleases. But the beast's spontaneity is not freedom. I emphasize this point, because in our day the drift of philosophical and scientific thought is toward determinism, and there are evidences that the tendency in theology, which has for the last generation been in the other direction, is beginning to follow the popular current. It is a

significant and not altogether edifying circumstance that we hear theologians appealing to Mill and Spencer in support of a doctrine of freedom, which is really a doctrine of necessity, paltering with us in a double sense, while scientific necessitarians like Professor Huxley piously aver that they are orthodox followers of Jonathan Edwards. And yet I do not hesitate to affirm that upon the maintenance of the doctrine of man's true freedom depend some of the most precious truths of ethics and theology. Without freedom there can be no such thing as responsibility, holiness, sin, guilt, grace, punishment. I am not sure that I might not go further and affirm that the rational proof of the divine existence is impossible, except as we reason from a finite personality, and therefore, from a free personality (for there can be no such thing as personality without freedom) to an Infinite Personality.

We are free. But we have been made so with a purpose. Man has his law as well as the brute. But while the brute follows his law with necessity, moved by the *vis a tergo* of irrational impulse, man has been so constituted that he is only under obligation to follow his law, not under necessity. He is to do it rationally and freely, without constraint, from love to the good and God. Herein consists the pre-eminence and excellency of man, and the wisdom, power, and love of God are manifest in the creation of such a being. God would have some creatures in His universe who would serve Him freely. But let the fact be emphasized that man was made free that he might use his freedom aright. He was made for the kingdom of God. Nevertheless, this freedom to attain his chief end, to love and serve God, from the nature of the case involved a power to the contrary. Instead of using his power of choice aright, as God intended he should, man may use it wrongly. Instead of employing his freedom to choose in such a way as to attain that real freedom which is the liberty of the sons of God, he can so

use it as to sell himself into the slavery of sin. Now in this abuse of freedom, this using of it for wrong and selfish ends, lies the essential principle of sin. It is the perversion of a power given for good ends. We need go no farther than the will of man to explain it. I shall show hereafter that our inherited tendencies and our sinful environment play their part in seducing the will to sin, but the real causality lies in the will itself, or rather in the man who exercises the will, and the true explanation of the sin is to be found in his wrong choice. Before leaving this branch of our subject, let me say that in asserting that God gave man his freedom that he might use it to attain his chief end, I have uttered nothing inconsistent with the fact that God knew that men would sin and ordained to permit them to sin. So far as sin has a place in the divine plan, it is in its true nature as wholly due to man and not at all to God. God has made man to be good, and that he is not good is his own fault. In thus speaking of man's destination, we speak of man as he ought to be. The divine plan includes not only what ought to be, but what is.

III. A distinction is commonly and justly made by theologians between sin as a permanent state of the will and the manifestation of that state in individual acts of transgression. It is to the latter that the term "actual sin" is applied, designating not real sin as opposed to imaginary sins, but the sin of act as opposed to the state of sin from which it proceeds. To properly appreciate this distinction, we must enter somewhat more deeply than we have done into the subject of the will and its freedom. There are two different functions of the will to which the psychologist calls our attention, the one *choice*, the other *volition*. In choice we select one of the various objects or ends of action as that toward which we will direct our energies. In volition we put forth energy for the attainment of the chosen end. The choice of itself brings

nothing to pass; it belongs purely to the soul. The volition is what brings to pass, and it has the power to produce effects beyond the soul. I choose to sing a hymn, but I do not sing until I have put forth a volition, which in some mysterious way sets the machinery of the brain and nerves and the muscles of the vocal apparatus in operation. Now freedom belongs primarily and directly to the region of choice. Volition may be abortive, as in the case of the paralytic or the prisoner who is under outward constraint, but the choice is free and no constraint of body or other outward power can affect it. Yet choice has its limitations and its laws. The popular idea of freedom is that it is an ability to choose at any moment in any way. But this is far from being the fact. Our full freedom is exercised in only a comparatively few cases of choice, while in the common choices that we are compelled daily and momentarily to make, we exercise only a modicum of freedom.

In order to bring this fact before us let us avail ourselves of a distinction current among philosophers, between ultimate, subordinate, and supreme ends of action, and the choices which correspond to them. An ultimate end is one that is in some sense an end in itself; it is one that dominates an extensive department of our lives, as, for example, the profession or business a man pursues is an ultimate end of his action. A subordinate end is one that is a means to an ulterior or ultimate end, as, for example, a journey to a distance, which a man of business has in contemplation, is an end subordinate to the great end which his business furnishes. A supreme end is the highest ultimate end. In strictness there is only one supreme end, the chief end of man, which is the kingdom of God; but, as we have seen, a man may make himself his supreme end. Now our choices correspond to these ends and vary accordingly. As the ultimate ends of life are comparatively few, so our ultimate choices are

few. The great majority of our choices are concerned with subordinate ends. The supreme choice is narrowed down to the one issue, God or Self. Freedom is exercised chiefly in our ultimate choices, and especially in the supreme choice. It is the peculiarity of these choices that while they may be made in a moment, they extend over long periods, the supreme choice being a choice for eternity. They are what we call permanent choices. They begin as acts of choice, but they are maintained as states of choice. A man chooses a profession. It is a choice for life. He remains, so long as he pursues the profession, in a permanent state of choice. In this state he is not only free, but it is the highest exercise of freedom. Now all the daily choices which this man makes with respect to things in any way connected with his profession are subordinate to this main choice, which is always present. You go to one man and say, "Come with me; I want to show you a fossil which has just been found in a quarry a couple of miles away." He answers, "No, I cannot; I am too busy." You go to another with the same invitation, and he says, "Wait till I get my coat and hat, and I'll be with you." What is the difference? The first man was a lawyer, his permanent choice reaches out to the great ends of his profession. He was free in choosing not to go with you, yet the permanent choice which governs his life had far more to do with his answer than the momentary choice. The other man was a geologist. He was free to stay at home, but the permanent choice which governs him was in line with your invitation. Under other circumstances the lawyer might have gone and the geologist have stayed at home, but it is easy to see that the choices of the moment were subordinate to their ultimate and permanent choices.

To the region of ultimate choices belongs character. When a man makes an ultimate choice, he makes a character. That is to say, he introduces an element of fixedness into his life. Freedom is the very opposite of li-

cense. The man who has no ultimate choices which abide permanently with him is not free. It is the caprice of the child which manifests itself in a mere snarl of contradictory choices and acts. We are able to live in society because men have such permanent and abiding choices, and we can count with a fair degree of certainty upon their acts. Character in the highest sense comes when a man has made the supreme choice of the kingdom of God, when his freedom is permanently enlisted in the service of the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. You can count upon such a man. You know that when temptations come to him he is certain not to yield to them, not because he is not free to do so, but because his permanent choice, in which his freedom is chiefly embarked, will dominate his subordinate choice. It would be wrong to say that the Christian who is approached with a temptation to dishonesty is not free when he resists it, but you must look for his freedom chiefly in the great permanent choice which dominates his life, not in the momentary subordinate choice.

But while character begins in our permanent choices, it runs out into our habits. These belong to the sphere of volition and outward act. Bodily actions when repeated form a bodily habit, that is, the body tends to act in the line thus marked out. So volitions repeated form a volitionary habit. Now the repetition of volitions involved in the continued exercise of a permanent choice and the corresponding subordinate choices forms a habit which reacts upon the choice itself, both the ultimate choice and the subordinate choices, and strengthens them. We thus surround ourselves with a bulwark of defence. It is also to be noted that the habits thus formed, and which constitute the body of character as the permanent choice constitutes its soul, have a certain independence. Suppose the ultimate choice to be changed—as it always can be, since it is free—then the new choice finds itself at cross-purposes with the old

habits. These habits in such a case may even bring about outward acts in direct opposition to the prevailing choice, and where they do not, they form strong motives to influence the man in his subordinate choices.

Now to return from this long philosophical disquisition—all of which will have its bearing upon our future investigations in theology—to the subject with which we started, the sins of state belong to the ultimate and supreme choices of men, while the sins of act belong to the subordinate choices and to the volitions and habits dependent upon them. It is in character that our sins of state are rooted. Let a man's ultimate choices be wrong and we have a deep-seated and abiding condition of wrong. Let his supreme choice be for self instead of for God and His kingdom, and the man's whole state is wrong. The Bible applies the term heart to the inmost condition of the will. An evil heart is a permanent choice of self and the world rather than of God and the good. Now the sins of act, the momentary sins, are the expression of the sin of state. It is because the supreme choice is wrong that the subordinate choices are wrong, and that the volitions and habits are wrong. "Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings" (Matt. xv. 19). A man is free and therefore responsible when he commits an outward act of sin, but we must look for the full explanation of his sin not merely to the modicum of freedom exercised in the choice of the moment, but to the sinful permanent choice which governs the man's life. That is the root of all sin. Yet it is to be noted—lest our theory should be stated so sweepingly as to prove untrue to facts—that a man's supreme choice may be changed, by God's grace become a choice of the kingdom, and yet sins of act occur. In this case, we must look rather to the deep-seated habit which biases the man in his subordinate choices for the explanation of the actual sins than to the main choice which

is now good. It is only slowly that old habits of soul and body are worked out and supplanted by the new habit which a different choice produces. Nevertheless, in time, what Dr. Chalmers calls "the expulsive power of a new affection," that is, of a new choice, will prevail.

IV. We have still to look at the guilt of sin and certain correlative ideas or facts closely connected with the conception of guilt.

By guilt in the deepest sense of the term we mean the responsible authorship of sin. "Guilty or not guilty?" is the question with which the prisoner is addressed at the bar of justice; "Didst thou do that of which thou art accused, and do it responsibly, or didst thou not?" Guilt is a personal matter. It implies that the causality of sin is in the guilty person. It is sin imputed to him because it is his. It also implies that the guilty person was free and therefore responsible. It carries with it the idea of ill-desert or unworthiness. There is also another element in guilt, namely, exposure to the just displeasure of the one who has been wronged by the sin, and therefore primarily exposure to the just displeasure of God. But this second element is dependent upon the first. The sinner is guilty in the sense of being exposed to the divine displeasure because he is guilty in the sense of being the responsible author of the sin. In no strict sense of the word guilt can we call a man guilty for a sin not his own; if we sometimes use such language, it is in a qualified and semi-figurative sense.

There are degrees of guilt in sin. This is a fact recognized by all theologians. As the Assembly's Catechism says, "Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others." The Old Testament distinguishes between "sins of infirmity," for which atonement was provided, and "presumptuous sins," which admitted of no atonement (Lev. v. 10; Numb. xv. 30; Ps. xix. 12, 13).

Our Saviour also distinguished between different degrees of guilt (Matt. x. 15; xi. 22 seq.; Luke xii. 48; John xv. 22, 24; xix. 11). There is one sin of which the guilt is supreme; it is the rejection of God's redeeming grace. For it no atonement is possible, because it involves a rejection of atonement (Heb. vi. 4-6; x. 26, 27; 1 John v. 16; 2 Pet. ii. 20 seq.). I will not enter into the question as to whether this sin of definitive rejection of God's grace is identical with the so-called "sin against the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 28-30; Luke xii. 10). At any rate they are alike in this, that both involve a turning away from the divine love and mercy and so leave nothing more for God to do. From this highest degree of guilt downward, there is a scale of decreasing degrees of guilt. In every case the degree of guilt depends upon the amount of knowledge, and the amount of freedom or ability to exercise freedom in choice. But all sins involve some guilt, and even the least sin exposes us to the just displeasure of a just and loving God, our Father and our Friend, as well as our Judge.

We have thus suggested to us the relation of punishment to sin. Guilt and punishment are correlatives. The middle term which connects them is the divine displeasure, the exposure to which is an element in guilt, and which is itself the root and deepest element of punishment. It is the reaction of God's holy nature against sin. The sinner wrongs God, he brings disorder into the sphere of His moral government, he separates himself from God, he treats his loving Father with ingratitude and sets His will at naught. The sinner is able to do this because he is free, and God respects the freedom He has made. But God does not view sin with indifference. Its guilt consists in the fact that it is sin against Him, and He shows His sense of its guilt by His displeasure. This is that "wrath of God," of which the Bible speaks so often, and which Paul says, "is revealed from heaven against

all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men " (Rom. i. 18). God's displeasure, when it is realized in its true meaning, is itself the direst punishment. Our true life is in God. Our blessedness is in communion with Him. But let us be separated from Him, let conscience witness to the divine displeasure and show us the clouded face of our Father, and no punishment could be greater. There is no expression in the Bible which more vividly describes the extreme of punishment than those dreadful words, "the wrath of the Lamb." But the divine displeasure is only the root of punishment. It displays itself in outward acts. Here we have first those natural consequences which God has attached to sin, and which are none the less a divine punishment because they have that uniformity which belongs to the ordinary operations of nature. Death is the most notable and certain of these consequences, and suffering of body and mind is the most common form in which they are manifested. Then there are the more special divine inflictions or judgments which are visited upon sin through God's punitive providence.

In the background of punishment, at once natural consequence and divine infliction, is the suffering of the other world, in which the soul is separated from God and the society of the good, and left to its own dark thoughts and deeds. Punishment is commensurate with guilt. It is retributive, and for every sin there is a corresponding recompense of retribution. It has been said that every sin deserves eternal punishment; but such an assertion seems to me untrue, as it is certainly unscriptural, for it reduces all sins to a common level, and makes no difference between the momentary selfishness of a child and the black treason of a Judas. But every sin has a punishment proportioned to its guilt. The object of punishment is, primarily, the salvation of the sinner. The divine love finds expression in the divine displeasure and manifests itself in outward punishment, that it may bring back

the wayward child to his home and his Father's heart. Punishment in its first intent is a blessing in disguise. But there is a limit to the divine forbearance, and when punishment fails to fulfil its primary purpose, when the sinner obstinately refuses to return to God, punishment enters upon another phase and exercises another function : it becomes God's means of nullifying the evil effects of sin and putting the sinner in a position where he can do no more mischief. In saying this, I do not mean to imply that this final punishment is not retributive. All punishment is retributive, but this is also coercive and repressive.

But the mention of the primary office of punishment, as intended to bring the soul back to God, suggests another fact or moral principle closely related to guilt and punishment. I refer to atonement. The sinner is separated from God by his guilt and under punishment. How shall he be brought back ? What is needed is reconciliation. It takes two to make a quarrel, and it also takes two to make up the quarrel. Now between man and God, as between man and man, there can be no reconciliation without atonement. Some amends must be made for the wrong done, some reparation rendered, some satisfaction given. This opens the way for reconciliation and affords a just ground for it. Atonement is not the same as punishment, though the two are very closely related. Punishment is inflicted by the one wronged, atonement is rendered by the wrong-doer. The sinner bears his punishment, he renders atonement. Atonement is in its deepest essence a matter of the sinner's will, as punishment is in its deepest essence a matter of the divine will. Atonement may express itself in some outward act or gift or offering, but the real atonement is a spiritual offering, a sacrifice of the heart. Punishment and atonement come close together when, as is sometimes the case, the atonement consists in the patient bearing of the punishment with full acknowledgment of its justice. When atonement does its work, that is, when

it is accepted, the result is reconciliation, displeasure is turned into favor. The outward effects of punishment may still continue, but when the displeasure is gone, the root of the punishment has been cut off and it ceases in any real sense to be punishment. In such a case "there is no more condemnation," but peace and blessedness. I have spoken of this subject of atonement at this stage of our inquiries only that I may show the sinner's attitude toward God and his need of atonement if he is to be reconciled to God. We shall consider hereafter his inability to render God any adequate atonement, and still later we shall investigate that central and wonderful truth of the Gospel, the doctrine of Christ's vicarious atonement, God's way of salvation for the sinner.

Such is sin—the anomaly of the universe, the blot upon the creation which God made very good, the disgrace of mankind. The more we study God's Word, and the further we advance in Christian experience, the profounder will become our sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. When men begin to make light of it, to call it by mild names, to regard it as infirmity and to ignore its guilt, they have entered upon a path that leads away from the Gospel. Christianity measures the guilt and the baleful importance of sin by the fact that God Himself became incarnate and in the person of Jesus Christ died upon the cross for our redemption from it. When we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we pray that sin may cease, that sinners may become reconciled to God, that Satan may be trampled under feet. What we need as Christians is to see sin as it is, in all its awful evil, that so we may know what Christ is and join him in his fight against it. If the Christian's work in the world may be expressed in its positive aspect as the service of God in His kingdom, it may be expressed negatively, with equal truth, as a warfare with Christ and all good beings as our fellow-soldiers, against sin.

XVIII.

SIN AND MAN'S RACE RELATIONS

IF you wish to know whether a man is a theologian, turn to his Greek Testament, and if it opens of its own accord to the fifth chapter of Romans, and you find the page worn and brown, you may safely set him down as a devotee of the sacred science. Upon the twelfth verse libraries have been written. It belongs to a passage which, more than any other in the Bible, has been the occasion of theological controversy. The interpretation of its last word has furnished the point of divergence to the great schools of divinity. Let us not, however, suppose that the controversies which have been waged about this verse are to be measured in importance by the place they occupy in histories of Christian doctrine. On the contrary, while they have brought much truth to light, and have done much to preserve precious Gospel teachings, they have also done much to discredit theology. In the silence of the Bible theologians often run riot. It has been so here. A simple fact of vast importance is taught in this verse, and has been left without explanation. The fact we need to hold fast, but we should respect the reticence of revelation, and if we speculate and theorize, we should hold our theories lightly, and with tolerance for the theories of others, ready to confess that we know in part and prophesy in part.

We have considered the nature of sin as it appears in the individual. Now we have to look at it in the race and to examine its effects upon the individual in his connection with the race.

I. The whole race is infected with sin—all men are sinners. To prove this from the Bible I do not need to cite particular texts of Scripture, like Solomon's words, "There is no man that sinneth not" (1 Kings viii. 46), or James's, "In many things we all stumble" (iii. 2), or to refer to those wonderful first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans in which Paul shows by incontestable facts that Jews and Gentiles alike "have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). For the universality of sin is one of the postulates of the Gospel system. It is implied in the scriptural teaching respecting the universal need of salvation, in the Old Testament law, in the institution of sacrifice, in the Jewish rite of circumcision, in the doctrine of atonement by Christ, in the call to repentance, in the universal offer of the Gospel, in the ordinance of baptism. One man, and one only, Jesus the Christ, has lived without sin. His holiness is the pure white light in which every life appears dark and spotted. There are those whom the Bible does indeed call righteous, but a closer examination of the facts shows that, as Calvin says (Com. on Psalm v. 12), they "are not so called on account of the merit of their works, but because they aspire after righteousness." When sometimes in a moment of self-confidence a Christian is tempted to think that he has passed beyond the power of sin, his presumptuous thought is checked by the stern words of John, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8). All normal Christian experience confirms the scriptural doctrine upon this point. The nearer a man gets to Christ, the more he feels the power of the Holy Spirit, the more profound becomes his realization of his own sin, and the more surely does he recognize the same evil in all his fellow-men. Nor need we appeal merely to the experience of the Christian; the common consciousness of mankind affirms the universality of sin. Heathenism, with all the imperfection of its con-

ception of sin, is farthest from attempting to deny that all men are sinners. Modern literature is full of confessions of this sad yet incontestable fact. Listen to Lord Byron as, in language quite as strong as that of the Bible, he teaches this doctrine :

“How beautiful is all this visible world !
 How glorious in its action and itself !
 But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,
 Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
 To sink or soar, with our mixed essence make
 A conflict of its elements, and breathe
 The breath of degradation and of pride,
 Contending with low wants and lofty will
 Till our mortality predominates,
 And men are—what they name not to themselves,
 And trust not to each other.” *

The fact stands undeniable. All men, heathen and Christian, converted and unconverted, children and adults, are sinners.

II. How now shall this fact be explained ? If men are free, how comes it that they all abuse their freedom and become sinners ? Freedom explains why *some* are sinners, but not why *all* are sinners. Must we not look further than men's freedom if we are to account for the universality of sin ?

Revelation answers the question by its doctrine of the Fall. “By one man sin entered into the world.” Men are not mere individuals, but members of a race. To understand the universality of sin we must go back to the beginnings of mankind.

It will not be possible at this time to enter into all the details of the wonderful history which is narrated in the second and third chapters of Genesis. We shall be able

* Manfred, Act i., Scene 2. See Mozley's Lectures and other Theological Papers ; Original Sin asserted by Worldly Philosophers and Poets.

to look only at its salient points. Like the account of creation, the narrative of the Fall has its counterpart in the traditions which come to us through the ethnic religions. But the story in Genesis is distinguished from these venerable heathen legends by the absence of all non-theistic and unworthy elements. Its profound truth does not need to be proved ; it shines in its own light. I see no reason to doubt its historical reality. To those Christian theologians who hold that it is "true but not actual," it may be conceded that the truth is presented in part in the form of symbols—the trees of the knowledge of good and evil, and of life, were no ordinary trees—but there is every ground for accepting the personages described as real, and the events as having actually taken place.

We have seen that God created man good. He came from the divine hand a perfect being. The divine image shone forth from him in its untarnished brightness. All his faculties and powers were complete and in perfect working-order. Intellectually he was fully equipped for his life-work, not indeed the paragon of knowledge the old theologians represented him, but in all the vigor of his new and untried powers, a man in capacity though still a child in acquisition. Morally also he was perfect, though this likewise was the perfection of the starting-point, not of the goal. He was more than innocent and less than holy. Made good, he was also made for the good. The different elements of his nature were perfectly balanced and worked together in undisturbed harmony, the lower in subordination to the higher. The bias of his nature was toward good. He stood in communion with God, whose love was upon him and whose Spirit dwelt in him, and to whom his natural affection turned in glad response. He was in the kingdom of God, so far as one can be in it by nature. He was in it by birthright and possession, in a higher sense than this can be said of the little children of later times, concerning whom our Saviour declared that

"Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Above all, he had free-will and the power to attain the chief end of his being without slip or fall. He might have been what Jesus Christ was, perfect in all his moral development.

In order to give our first parents the opportunity to attain moral and spiritual maturity, God subjected them to a process of education. He made external nature a means of training them in practical knowledge and wisdom, and revealed Himself to them that they might learn their true destination. But it was not mere education. We might conceive of these first children of God being subjected only to such influences as would help them forward to their goal. But God chose another method, namely, education by probation. By probation I understand not merely trial, but trial under mixed influences, evil as well as good. God knew the end from the beginning when He permitted the Serpent to enter Paradise. The problem of the permission of temptation is in principle the same as the problem of the permission of sin, which we have already considered. God meant to overrule the evil for a higher good. He knew by His eternal omniscience that man would sin, and had taken up the Fall into His great plan, but He intended that where sin abounded grace should much more abound (Rom. v. 20); the Fall was to open the way of redemption through Christ.

When considering the degrees of guilt, we distinguish two kinds of sin, a sin of weakness and a sin of deliberate presumption. The first sin was of the former kind. The parents of the race were beguiled into transgression by a superhuman Evil Being. The Serpent offered Adam and Eve a real good, but he would have them obtain it by unlawful means. "*Eritis sicut Deus!*" Ye shall become like God. To fully realize the divine image is human duty. "Be ye holy, for I am holy" God says to us. "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heav-

en," says Christ. But there is a right and a wrong way of becoming like God. The right way is by obedience to Him, by trust and dependence upon Him. Our first parents used their freedom to choose the wrong way of attaining the right end. They sought to reach their chief end by going outside of the kingdom of God. The fruit of the tree was only the occasion of the wrong choice; both in God's purpose and man's thought it was a means to an end beyond itself. Adam and Eve had not much moral knowledge, but they had enough to understand that first law of the kingdom of God, that God's will is to be done under all circumstances in God's way, that obedience is duty and disobedience sin. In their disobedience against the light of a consciously recognized obligation to God lay their guilt, a guilt that cost them Paradise. Yet, after all, it was a Fall, not a deliberate act of rebellion against God, and it left them still capable of redemption. There was a sin of a deeper dye, a sin that shuts out even from divine help, which our first parents had not committed.

The consequences of sin followed close upon the heels of the first transgression. By it our first parents turned aside from the pursuit of their chief end and put themselves outside of the kingdom of God. The relation of communion and fellowship in which they had stood with God was broken. The divine displeasure, which is the root and deepest element of all punishment, rested upon them. They were deprived of the special influences and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and only the more external influences of the Spirit in conscience remained. Conscience itself witnessed to God's displeasure, raising its voice in condemnation and filling them with a shame which led the guilty children of God to hide themselves from the face of their heavenly Father and to try to conceal their nakedness from each other. The expulsion from Paradise symbolized and turned into outward punishment

the separation from God and His kingdom. There were also inward consequences. The abuse of freedom disturbed the machinery of man's spiritual powers, hitherto so nicely adjusted and working in such perfect harmony. A wrong character was formed by the wrong choice. Self-love, which is good when subordinated to the love of God, became selfishness. The natural bias toward God and His kingdom became transformed into a bias toward sin. The law of habit began to work to fix the evil character which had been initiated. A corrupt nature was formed, for which our first parents were responsible, because it was the result of their own sin, and which became an inward source of temptation to new sin. Finally, the divine penalty, which had been threatened in case of disobedience, fell upon them; they became subject to death. Undoubtedly the death here referred to is physical death, the separation of soul and body and the accompanying dissolution of the body. Man was made to be a unity, as we know from the doctrine of the resurrection. Sin has destroyed that unity. The spirit and the body are so adjusted that the disorder of the former brings about the destruction of the latter. The divine threat went into immediate execution. The first act of transgression gave man, in place of the glorious body which God created, such a "mortal body" as that of which Paul speaks (Rom. vi. 12; viii. 11). Death is ever the great outward and visible proof of the divine punishment of sin, and thus it becomes the symbol of the spiritual disorder and of the eternal consequences of that disorder. There is a spiritual death and there is a punishment that is eternal death.

But we shall not do justice to the scriptural teachings respecting the Fall if we stop at this point. Our first parents were not left to themselves when they had sinned. I have before insisted that redemption was not an afterthought. Grace began to work as soon as man sinned. The promise of redemption through the seed of the wo-

man was given before the culprits were expelled from Paradise. They found God outside the garden as well as in it. Without removing the natural consequences of sin, He granted His forgiving grace to His fallen children, on the ground of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The kingdom of God was opened to them once more, upon different conditions indeed, but with the blessed assurance that the effects of the Fall should yet be overcome. This did not make Adam's transgression less a sin or himself less a sinner. It put him into a new relation to God, in which, though he deserved nothing, yet there was a possibility that by God's grace he might still have all.

III. Such was the first sin, and such its effects upon those who committed it. But we still ask, How did this first sin give rise to the sins of the countless millions of mankind? Upon this point the Bible gives us no information. The fact that there is some kind of causal connection between Adam's transgression and the sins of his descendants is implied in the third chapter of Genesis. It is hinted at in the fifteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians (verse 22), where we are told that "in Adam all die;" for it is the teaching of the Bible elsewhere that death is the punishment of individual sin. The fullest treatment of the subject is to be found in the fifth chapter of Romans, verses 12-21. It is indeed only incidentally that Paul speaks of it. He is enlarging upon the greatness of the blessings which have flowed to mankind from the redemptive work of Christ, and enforces the truth by a comparison between Christ and Adam, in which he shows that the benefits which have resulted from the obedience of the former have far exceeded the evils which have resulted from the disobedience of the latter. He has in mind rather the universal consequence of death which has fallen upon all men as the effect of Adam's transgression than the universal sin which has come from the same source. Yet when in the 12th verse we are told

that "through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned," a causal connection of some sort between the first sin and the universal sin is certainly indicated, and this whether we understand the words, "for that all sinned," to designate directly the transgressions of individual men or to point in a figurative sense to a participation in Adam's transgression. In the latter understanding of the clause its meaning would be analogous to that of the words referred to a moment ago, "In Adam all die," which does not mean that all men actually died when Adam died, but that inasmuch as they all died in consequence of his transgression they may be figuratively regarded as participating in his death. This causal connection between the first transgression and the sins of Adam's posterity is implied throughout the whole passage; but it comes to the clearest statement in the 19th verse, where we are told that "through one man's disobedience the many," that is, as the context shows, all mankind, "were made sinners." But even here the nature of the connection is not stated, and we look in vain for any explanation. There are, it is true, certain other passages in the Bible, upon which theologians rely to prove their theories respecting the connection, but when they are subjected to a full and impartial exegesis they turn out to be utterly valueless so far as the subject before us is concerned.

How shall we explain this reticence of revelation? I do not know. Perhaps it is better for us to respect it than to try to explain it. A sufficient reason may be that the silence of the Bible concerns the philosophy of sin, and that it is no object of the Bible to teach philosophy. The important facts are that men are sinners, and that sin entered the world in the beginnings of the race.

Nevertheless, we may not leave the subject here. No adequate theological knowledge of the doctrine before us is possible without some consideration of the various

theories which have been held respecting the relation of the universal sin to Adam's transgression. Moreover, it is right that we, while reverently accepting the reticence of the Bible and candidly confessing our ignorance, should give such explanation as we can. It is not wrong to speculate and philosophize. The wrong comes in when on the ground of our speculations and philosophizings we begin to dogmatize.

IV. There is no more interesting chapter in the history of Christian doctrine than that which relates to the subject before us. The profoundest thought of some of the greatest theologians and philosophers has been devoted to the doctrine of sin. I can give here only the most meagre outline.

We begin with the theory of Augustin. This great man, who had been brought by God's grace out of a life of sin, and through many intellectual and spiritual errors into the freedom and grace of the Gospel, was profoundly convinced of the impotency of the sinful human will, and the entire dependence of man upon God's grace. This led him to lay the strongest emphasis upon the divine predestination. It led him, also, so far as our doctrine is concerned, to seek the closest causal connection between the sin of Adam and the sinfulness of his descendants. Starting from the premises of the Platonic realism, Augustin taught that the whole race was in Adam when he sinned. It was consequently the personal transgression of each member of the race. Our individual existence begins with birth, but there is a pre-existent state in our ancestors. Now, since we were all in Adam, we all sinned when he sinned. Consequently, when we begin our individual existence we are burdened with the guilt and the consequences of Adam's sin, and for the best of reasons—because it was *our own* sin. We come into the world with a depraved nature inherited from Adam, which is sinful and the source of sin. This corrupt nature is called

"original sin," to distinguish it from the actual sins which we commit as individuals. But the sinful nature gives rise of necessity to actual sin. Our wills have no power to choose the good, or, as Augustin puts it, we are free only to do evil. On account both of the transgression of Adam and our corrupt nature we are guilty and condemned. We are born into the world under sentence of eternal punishment, and can be delivered from it only by the unmerited grace of God.

Precisely the opposite of this stern theory was that of Augustin's great opponent, Pelagius. He had been brought up in the Greek church, where much emphasis was laid upon the freedom of the will. He held that we come into the world as free as Adam, and without either guilt for his transgression or a corrupt nature inherited from him. The only connection between Adam's sin and that of his posterity which Pelagius would admit was that arising from the evil effects of Adam's example. Our first parents stood at the head of the line and set an example of sin, which most of their descendants have followed, though Pelagius claimed that not a few men have led perfect lives.

The prevalent theory of the Middle Ages sought to avoid the extremes of the doctrines of Augustin and Pelagius. The church of Rome taught that Adam before the Fall possessed an especial endowment of divine grace by which his lower nature was kept in subordination to the higher. By the Fall he lost this "superadded gift" and his nature was corrupted. We are born into the heritage of his sin and guilt. We, like him, are deprived of the divine grace which he had before the Fall, and herein consists our original sin, which renders us guilty before God. We also inherit from him a disordered nature, or concupiscence, which, however, is not in itself sinful. By baptism original sin is washed away and the divine grace restored, and while concupiscence remains, and is the source of temptation to sin, we have free-will to resist it.

The Reformers held in substance the theory of Augustin, though they made little use of the theory of realism by which he explained our connection with Adam. The first important modification among Protestants of the Augustinian doctrine was the so-called Federal or Covenant Theory, according to which God established with Adam a "covenant of works" in behalf not only of himself but all his posterity. Adam was made the representative of all mankind, and upon his choice hung the moral and spiritual destiny of the race. He fell, and, so far as their relation to God was concerned, the race fell with him. Consequently, we come into the world resting under the guilt of Adam's transgression, which is imputed to us because he was our federal representative, while we inherit from him the corrupt nature, or original sin, which was the result of his transgression. The practical results of this theory are the same as those which flow from the Augustinian, the only difference being that the oneness with Adam is a legal rather than a personal union. The Federal theory binds us with the same iron chain of guilt, condemnation, and helplessness.

A more decided modification of the Augustinian position, though not differing in its practical results, was the theory of Mediate Imputation, taught by French Protestant theologians of Saumur about the middle of the seventeenth century. This theory represents men as coming into the world not with the double guilt which the Augustinian and Federal doctrines teach, but with only the guilt which arises from the corrupt nature, or original sin, which we inherit from Adam. Adam's sin is not imputed directly to us, but only indirectly or mediately through our inherited corruption of nature.

A more decided departure from the older views was involved in the Arminian views on the subject. The theologians of this school held to the existence of original sin, by which men are exposed to God's wrath and rendered

incapable of doing His will ; but they also taught a universal grace by which the effects of the Fall are nullified and all men are capacitated to accept the invitations of the Gospel and attain their chief end.

The old doctrine of sin among our New England fathers was the Federal theory, as stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith. The result, however, of that remarkable movement which is known by the name of the New England Theology, and which began in the teachings and speculations of Jonathan Edwards, was to introduce some important changes. The theologians of this school denied the imputation of Adam's sin, either directly or mediately. Men, they said, are guilty only for their own sins. They also denied that we inherit a corrupted nature or original sin. The only original sin, declare Hopkins and Eminons, was the sin of Adam. Their maxim was that "All sin consists in sinning ;" there can be no sin that is not the outcome of a man's own choice. Yet they did not deny the connection between Adam's transgression and the sins of his posterity ; on the contrary, these theologians made much of it in their system. They found the connection in what they called a "divine constitution," that is, an arrangement of God's providence by which, as the result of Adam's sin, each member of the race begins his moral career with a sinful choice, his first moral act being a sinful act. We cannot go behind this divine constitution ; it is so because God has made it so. These stalwart New England theologians were strict determinists ; they held a doctrine of "divine efficiency," which made God, to all intents and purposes, the author of all human acts, good and bad alike. Their theory was that God, on account of Adam's sin, so orders things as to make our first choice a sinful choice. It was reserved for Dr. N. W. Taylor, of New Haven, one of the greatest in the long line of New England theologians, to rescue the doctrine from the extremes into which it had run, while at the same time he

retained all the more important results that had been won in the struggles with the old Calvinistic doctrine. He taught that as the result of Adam's sin men came into the world with a bias or tendency to sin, which is not the efficient cause but only the occasion of their sins. Through the operation of this bias and the circumstances in which they are placed, all men sin, but they do it freely and not from necessity. Dr. Taylor repudiated the doctrine of the divine efficiency and maintained the true freedom of man. He left the way open for one further step, which very many, if not most, of the later theologians of New England have taken, namely, the explanation of the bias or tendency to sin through inheritance from our ancestors, and ultimately from Adam.

V. The way is now open for us to attempt a theological statement of our own upon this most interesting subject. We shall use the history of speculation aright, not so much by allowing ourselves to wonder at the vagaries of the theologians as by seeking the elements of truth which their theories contain, and seeking to combine them into one consistent whole.

We have to do with the relations of the individual to the race. Let us, before we attempt to solve the problem of the connection of Adam's sin with ours, look at this matter. We are not mere individuals, we are members of a race. The race is an organism, that is, it is a whole composed of parts or members, which are reciprocally means and ends, and which work together for the attainment of the end which belongs to the whole. The race is not merely the aggregate of the individuals which belong to it. It has an existence that is over and above the existence of its members. When we speak of *man* we do not mean the same thing as when we speak of *men*. So there are smaller unities in the great unity of the race, each of which is composed of many individuals. There are nations, and when we speak of them we do not mean

merely the sum total of people who live in a certain country, but a body that has its own peculiarities, a moral person, if we may use the term, which has its own characteristics, its own mission, its own destiny. The family is another unity in the larger unity with its own peculiar life and function.

Now we cannot understand a man if we look at him in his mere individuality. We must view him also in his relation to mankind. Indeed a man could not become a man, if he were left to himself. He is like a fruit that must have a tree to grow upon. Cut him off and he leads an imperfect life, if he leads any at all. There is a connection between men which makes them dependent upon each other for well-being and growth, which gives them common fortunes, common joys and sufferings, common destinies. We are all under the law of solidarity, as it is called. We are bound up in a common life. We cannot keep the effects of our acts to ourselves; they go on vibrating into other lives. We are affected by all the influences about us. If, then, we are to explain what a man is and what he does, we must distinguish three elements in his life—hereditary influence, environment, and freedom.)

Modern science, especially in connection with the theory of organic evolution, has brought into prominence the effects of heredity. An important part of what we are comes to us from our ancestors. We inherit their bodily peculiarities, their mental aptitudes, their dispositions, good and bad. Blood tells. We did not choose our fathers and mothers, but much of what we are depends upon the fact that they were they, and not other people. We are chips of the old block. The peculiarities of remote ancestors come out in us. Augustin was struggling with a great truth when he taught our oneness with Adam. We have pre-existed in our ancestors, and our lives are, in a true sense, a prolongation of theirs.

But even more important than our inheritance is the environment into which we enter. In the most formative period of life, when our wills and our whole moral and spiritual nature are plastic, we are brought under the play of the strongest moral influences, good and bad, which exist in the world. There is home in the first place.

How much of what is most important in our after-life is taken in with our mothers' milk! What a moulding power parents and brothers and sisters and all the home surroundings have over us! It makes an enormous difference whether a child is brought up in a Christian home or a pagan home. Then there are the influences of companionship, of the school, of the church, of the business we enter, of society generally, of literature, of politics. What a steady and constant pressure of influences there is upon us from every side!

In the midst of these influences, hereditary and environing, freedom has its opportunity and its mission. At first it is almost powerless under the pressure from within and without. But gradually it finds its strength. It is far from being omnipotent, but though it cannot do all things, it can do much. It can modify the inherited nature. Evil dispositions which came to us from our parents or parents' parents can be gradually overcome. Good dispositions can be fostered. Mental aptitudes can be developed. Then the free-will reacts upon the environment. We are not only influenced but we can exert influence. For good or for evil we can accept or resist the forces that act upon us. As one after another the choices of life are passed over from parents and teachers and employers to the child and youth, the opportunity comes to use freedom in determining the tenor of our existence and establishing our future. Character is something each man forms for himself. He does not inherit it. It does not come to him from his environment. It is his own.

Now, as I have already said, if we will explain a man's life and work, we must look at these three things—hereditary influence, environment, and freedom. Let us look at the three in connection with the subject of sin. In the first place, sin has affected us in our inherited nature. When Adam sinned he brought disorder into his moral and physical nature. This disorder, which was a source of temptation to further sin, and as the result of repeated sins became a fixed habit, a corrupt nature, was transmitted by Adam to his descendants, who in turn passed it on to theirs, with such increments of evil habit as their own sin produced. It is true that Adam and his descendants, being under the divine grace, made good choices and formed right habits, which they also transmitted to their posterity; but these influences were not sufficient to counteract the evil influences. So it happens that we all, proximately, as the result of the sins of our immediate ancestors, and ultimately, as the result of Adam's sin, come into the world with a disordered or corrupt nature. This nature is not itself sin, nor is it sinful in any strict sense of the word. We may call it, if we please, in deference to accepted theological usage, original sin; but we use the word sin in this case in a very different sense from what we do when we are speaking of our own evil choices and their consequences. We are not responsible for our corrupt nature, nor does it entail guilt upon us. God views things as they are, and he does not hold us guilty unless we are truly guilty. Nevertheless, this inherited nature is a source of strong temptation to sin. It acts upon our wills with a mighty pressure. It is a traitor within the camp, that often leads us to an ignominious surrender of our freedom. We may even so far yield to it as to identify ourselves with it and become responsible for it. But we may, if we will, resist it, and at last, in the other life, if not in this, wholly overcome it. Just as we overcome our self-formed evil habits by a new

choice which gradually forms new habits, so this inherited habit may be by God's grace gradually overcome.

Then, sin is everywhere in our environment. Looking first at the inmost environment, the Holy Spirit does not dwell in us at the first to exercise those special influences which Adam possessed. We have indeed the indwelling of the Spirit, in and through conscience, by which we know our duty to God and our fellow-men, and especially in Christian countries the gracious workings of the Spirit attending God's revelation of grace are brought to bear upon the soul. But in conscience and grace the Holy Spirit comes to us, so to speak, from without, and only enters the inmost life as we open our hearts by a free and conscious act to receive Him. Moreover, we enter into a world where sin abounds. Our parents are sinful, our friends are sinful, sin is rooted in all the institutions of society. Satan is active everywhere. The world is a wicked world. Even nature is affected and is a source of temptation to sin. The divine grace, it is true, is, as has just been said, also working in the world, but the kingdom of God has not yet so far advanced as to have overcome the evil. From our earliest infancy, along with influences of good which tend to make us holy, the temptations to sin come in upon us from every side. If our inherited nature is a traitor within the camp, the full attack of the enemy comes to us from without. We are not responsible for this sinful environment. So far as it affects us necessarily and without our consent, it entails no guilt upon us. Doubtless there are many things in every life which to men appear sinful, but which the Searcher of Hearts knows to be merely natural effects of our surroundings, over which we could have no control. The rampant wickedness in which the people of Sodom and Gomorrah found themselves placed will not be counted against them in the day of judgment, so far as they did not consent to it by their own free choice (Matt. x. 15; xi. 24). Never-

theless, we have a power of resistance which enables us to brace ourselves against, and by God's grace finally to overcome, the evil influences of our surroundings. Our responsibility depends upon our attitude toward the sin about us, our acceptance or resistance of it, according to the knowledge and ability which we possess.

It is under the pressure of these influences that our freedom is developed. God has placed us in a state of probation and gives us our spiritual education in a school of mingled good and evil. As a matter of fact we all sin. To a greater or less extent we consent by our free choice to the temptations which come to us from our disordered nature and our sinful surroundings. This is sin. It begins with the first moral activity of the child. If not counteracted by the divine grace, it becomes at last that confirmed choice of self and rejection of God which shipwrecks the whole man. When we reach the period of full moral responsibility, and find ourselves confronting the great question of life, the kingdom of God or the service of self, we discover that we have already, by many acts of choice, for which we have been responsible just in proportion to our knowledge and freedom, to a great extent decided the question against God. We are sinners. All that can be said is that we have not sinned away our day of grace. That we cannot do until with full knowledge and purpose we reject God's proffered grace.

Now in large part we can explain the universality of sin through heredity and environment: but not altogether. The essential element in sin is freedom. That must be held fast at all hazards. If we let that go, sin ceases to be sin, and responsibility and guilt vanish with it. There is therefore an inscrutable factor in our problem, and we may as well confess it. Free choice is always inscrutable. It is an ultimate fact. We may explain why a man did so and so in part by the motives which influenced him, but only in part; as regards the accept-

ance of the motives we can only say that he did so, he chose so, and that is the end of it. It is the same with this universal choice. We explain it in part by the corrupt nature and the environment, we can see that there is also a partial explanation in the fact that rationality and freedom have their beginnings and growth under these influences and are affected by them in their immaturity and weakness when they have not as yet gained power to resist. Freedom is not the absolute power that some persons think it to be. Let the child grow up in an absolutely holy environment like that of heaven, and in all probability—perhaps I should say in all certainty—he would always make the holy choice. He would not be such a fool as to use his freedom in any other way. But here it is different. “The web of our life is a mingled yarn, good and ill together.” Sin does not stand alone; in every soul it is connected with much that is good. When we speak of the universality of sin, we do not mean a sin that shuts out all good; we do not mean the unmixed sin of those beings who have said,

“Evil, be thou my good!”

Nevertheless, when all is said, I come back to the assertion that there is an inscrutable element in the fact before us. We cannot deny the universality of sin. We may not deny the freedom of man in sinning. If the question be asked, Why not? may there not be a sin that is not free? I answer, No—such a sin is not a sin in any true sense of the word; conscience does not condemn us for it, we cannot believe that God holds us responsible for it. There are difficulties on both sides of every great question. Our duty is to accept the side that presents the fewest difficulties. To my mind the few difficulties which are connected with the admission that there is a free choice in every sin are as nothing compared with the difficulties which arise upon the opposite assumption.

What, then, is our doctrine of the connection between the transgression of Adam and the universal sinfulness of the race? It is simply this: As the result of Adam's sin, all men come into the world with a corrupt or disordered nature, inherited from their ancestors, which, in connection with the sinful influences of their surroundings, leads them all into sin. But this disordered nature is only the occasion of their sin, while the true cause is their free choice.

In conclusion, let me call attention to the fact that the effects of our free choice and the effects of heredity and environment are so mixed and tangled in our inner life that it is almost, if not wholly, impossible to separate them. We have no power to judge each other; we cannot rightly judge ourselves. Only He who has made us and watched over us from the beginning, who has permitted the evil for which we are not responsible to enter our lives and has surrounded us with His grace, has the knowledge and the skill to unravel the tangled skein of our inner lives. He is the Judge. When our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things. The God-man who combines in his exalted person the omniscience and the perfect righteousness of God with the human experience in which he was "tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin," will conduct the judgment of the Last Day. The lesson of our subject is one of charity for each other and great compassion. We are none of us free from sin; we may none of us judge our brother. There is profound theology and philosophy, as well as fine poetry, in the words of Robert Burns:

"Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman,
Though they may gang a kennie wrang,
To step aside is human:

One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *why* they do it ;
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

“ Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us,
He knows each chord—its various tone,
Each spring—its various bias :
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it :
What's *done* we partly may compute,
But know not what's *resisted*.”

XIX.

MAN'S CONDITION AS A SINNER

THE patient student who works his way through the long and voluminous history of the doctrine of sin is impressed with the fact that most of the theologians who have discussed this difficult subject have fallen into one or both of two errors, which have greatly impaired the value of their conclusions. In the first place, they have ignored the divine grace in their consideration of sin. The "natural man" whose condition they have portrayed is a sinner utterly separated from God in a world where the only divine influences are punitive. But such a sinner is an imaginary being, not a real one. The natural man, as he actually exists, lives in a world where God's grace, based on the redemptive work of Christ and administered by Christ through the Holy Spirit, is everywhere at work. The sinner with whom we have to do is not the soul that is irremediably lost and shut out from God's presence, but the lost soul which God is still seeking, the one lost sheep for whose recovery the Good Shepherd has left the ninety and nine.

The other error has been the shifting of the emphasis of the doctrine from the point where the Bible places it, namely, the moral condition of adult and fully responsible sinners, to the point of greatest theological, as well as philosophical difficulty, namely, the moral condition of infants and little children. Now the Bible is not addressed chiefly to children. It tells us almost nothing about infants, except to assure us, in the Master's name,

that "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." The children who have come to the age when they "know good and evil" are treated as sinners and as needing divine grace, but little is said of the character and extent of their sin. And yet most of the theories of the theologians turn upon the condition of the new-born child in its inward state and its relation to God's punitive justice. Dr. Emmons was so perplexed by the possibility that infants might live for a while before they began to sin, that he was obliged to have recourse to the hypothetical annihilation of infants dying in this undecided state. Now I do not say that the moral state of little children is not a legitimate subject for speculation; we have ourselves to some extent considered it in the last chapter. But I do emphatically deny that it is the important element in the doctrine. We can afford to confess considerable ignorance respecting the moral beginnings and early development of children. But it is of vital importance that we should have decided views respecting the moral condition of those who have come to years of responsibility and to whom the warnings and invitations of the Saviour and his apostles are chiefly addressed.

Let us have these two errors in mind that we may avoid them in dealing with the subject which now comes before us, namely, the condition of man as a sinner.

1. Our moral development takes place in a state of probation. God has put us into the world that He might educate us for His kingdom, that is, that He might lead us by moral and spiritual influences to freely choose and pursue our chief end. The method He has chosen for the attainment of this result is education by probation. I have referred to this divine arrangement when treating the subject of the Fall, and have incidentally touched upon it in the attempt to explain the universality of sin. Now I wish to speak of man's condition as a sinner under probation. And first, let us ask, what is meant by probation? The term has come into prominence in the recent dis-

cussions in theology, and it is important that we should clearly understand its meaning. Bishop Butler, who perhaps more than any other man has been instrumental in bringing this conception into theological currency, says: "The first and most common meaning of it seems to be that our future interest is now depending, and depending upon ourselves; that we have scope and opportunities here for that good and bad behavior which God will reward and punish hereafter; together with temptations to one, as well as inducements of reason to the other." Again, he speaks of it as "implying in it trial, difficulties, and danger" ("Analogy," Pt. I., ch. iv.). The peculiarity, then, of a probation is, that it involves the decision of the will respecting the great ends of life in a mixed state. On the one side there are temptations to sin; on the other, not only the "inducements of reason," of which Butler speaks, but all the varied influences of the divine grace. Moreover, probation involves a mingling of natural good and evil. On the one side are the common mercies of life and those good things temporal and spiritual which are the result of God's grace working in the world. On the other, are the evils which have come in the train of sin, and which are the manifestation of the disorder produced in the natural world by sin. Death reigns and none escape its hand. Pain and sorrow are everywhere. We are surrounded by discomforts, difficulties, perplexities, dangers. Disease is at work on every side. In view of the solidarity in which men stand, we must regard these evils as entailed upon the race. It is, indeed, true that in the strict sense of the terms sin, guilt, and punishment, they can be applied only to the free acts of individuals and their personal consequences. But there is a true sense, though not the highest and strictest, a semi-figurative use of language which yet conveys a most important truth, in which we may speak of a race sin, a race guilt, and even a race punishment. Just so far as the individual is a branch of

the common trunk and shares the general life, he partakes of and is immersed in the common moral evil and its effects. He belongs to a fallen race, a lost world, an "evil and adulterous generation." Only we should remember that there is another side to the fact; through Christ's redemptive work the influences of God's grace and their effects are operating in the world. In the same semi-figurative but real sense in which we call the world a lost world and speak of a race punishment, we may speak of a redeemed world and a race redemption. This is the theme of that wonderful passage in the Epistle to the Romans, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vii. 24, 25). The corporate evil, beginning in sin and running out into death and its attendant evils, is matched by the corporate blessings beginning in Christ's official obedience and running out through the mediation of human faith and holiness into life and its attendant benefits. "As through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life" (Rom. v. 18).

Now in giving us our moral development in a world in which sin and grace are struggling for the mastery God undoubtedly acted with deliberate purpose and foresight. The universal sin had a place permissively in His eternal decree, and He arranged the world with reference to it. It was to be the peculiarity of man that, being a sinner, he should make his decisions and attain his moral and spiritual maturity in a mixed state, that is, through a probation. It was under these circumstances that God meant to establish His kingdom. Undoubtedly other methods were open to God. He seems to have employed a different method in the case of the angels. He does so in the case of the human beings who die in infancy. But there is every reason to believe that, on the whole, the

method which God has employed is the best for men who were to be sinners. Perhaps we might even go farther and say that it is better to be a sinner under probation than to be sinless without probation ; but I realize the difficulties of such a position and do no more than suggest it. It is true that probation involves some very great risks. It involves the possibility of falling into irreparable sin and makes such a fall easy enough for all who yield to the allurements of sin. But, on the other hand, there are great and more than counterbalancing possibilities, and the whole power of God's grace is enlisted upon their side to make them actual. Even the evils of which we have spoken are made means of good in God's economy of probation. Sin itself, the one absolute evil, can yet be overruled for good in the individual life, as it is in the history of God's kingdom. God can turn it into an incentive to holiness, and often does so. This is particularly the case with the sins of frailty which play so large a part in every life and do not involve an irremediable breach with God. There is truth in Longfellow's version of Augustin's words,

"That of our vices we can frame
A ladder, if we will but tread
Beneath our feet each deed of shame."

Then those evils which have come upon the world in consequence of sin, and which we call "natural" to distinguish them from "moral" evil, or sin itself—these evils, I say, are intended for our good, in so far as they are checks upon sin and means of discipline and training in holiness. Pain and sorrow are evil in themselves and could not exist in a perfect world. We have the promise that in the perfected kingdom of God they will be done away. In the heavenly city of which John tells us in the Revelation there shall not be "mourning or crying or pain any more" (Rev. xxi. 4). But in such a world as

this, with its temptations to sin, pain and sorrow are the divine instruments in the work of redemption. Where sin gets the upper hand, and the soul is moving steadily and swiftly toward destruction, God calls a halt by sending sickness or some other form of trouble. That He may strengthen the spiritual life of His children, He subjects them to the discipline of suffering or bereavement. These evils may come as the direct consequence of personal sin, or they may come as the result of the corporate sin; they may come according to the uniformly working laws of the material and moral spheres, or they may come through the more special operation of the divine providence moving freely in the spheres of nature and the soul. Where the sinner is separated from God they bear the aspect of punishment, since they have their origin in the divine displeasure; what we have called in a semi-figurative sense the race punishment may thus, without changing its outward character, become a personal punishment in the strictest sense of the term. Yet even for this class there is always, while the period of probation lasts, an element of grace in the punishment. Its object is to lead to repentance—as this is indeed the primary object of all punishment. Where the sinner is reconciled to God and united to Him by a personal faith these evils bear the character not of punishment but of fatherly chastisement; and are tokens of the divine love. They may even be inflicted, or permitted to come, not on account of any particular sins, but rather for the strengthening and upbuilding of the Christian life and the fitting for service in God's kingdom. I may speak in similar language of death. This is the universal consequence of sin. It deserves, if anything does, to be called the race punishment, and certainly should be so called if we are careful to understand the term punishment in the restricted sense which has already been referred to. Death befalls every member of the race, alike the bad and the

relatively good. Infants who have committed no personal sins nevertheless die. But death is, on the whole, in a world like this, a blessing. It also is a check upon sin and an incentive to holiness. God has no more potent agency in bringing men out of their sins into the kingdom of heaven. The fear of death works with power on many souls. The certainty of death and the uncertainty of the time when it may come, the constant danger of it, make us realize that we have here no abiding city, turning our thoughts from the things seen and temporal to the things not seen and eternal. The death of those who are nearest and dearest to us disengages our affections from this world. In view of the great tasks which God sets before us, the thought of death makes us say, like the Master, "I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work" (John ix. 4). In so far as men are unreconciled to God, death is to them not merely the race punishment but a personal punishment, which carries with it "the dread of something after death." To God's children, who have been forgiven and taken into His family once more, death is chastisement and discipline, but no longer punishment. "The sting of death" has been removed when God's displeasure has been changed into favor. But still it is the great reminder to them of what they are apart from the divine grace.

The real nature of this probationary state in which man, the sinner, is placed becomes manifest when we view it in the light of Christ's earthly life. It is a matter of no small importance that the one perfect man passed through the same probation which we are experiencing, and that he was made perfect through its sufferings and its death. The Saviour, it is true, was not here from necessity, as we are. He humbled himself and became subject to the evils of this life for our sake, not for his own. But there is deep significance in the fact that by

thus submitting to the trial, the temptations, the sufferings, the contradiction of sinners and the death, which belong to our probation, he wrought out that life which is at once our pattern and the pledge of our final redemption. He showed that these things are not evil in themselves, but only when the free-will yields to them and so makes them evil. To him the promise was fulfilled in all its completeness, that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. viii. 28). In a different world there could have been no such Redeemer, and in a world where the Master was, it is good for the disciple to be; where the One has triumphed, the other can be "more than conqueror" through his grace.

II. In presenting the subject of probation I have so far anticipated topics which belong to a later stage of our discussion as to speak of the believer as well as of the still unforgiven sinner. But our concern at present is with the latter, the so-called "natural man." The point I wish now to make is, that the unconverted sinner is wholly alienated from God. We have seen that there are certain generic or ultimate choices which constitute character and give moral tone to extensive departments of a man's life. These determine the nature of the subordinate choices which are auxiliary to them. We have also seen that there must be a supreme choice which will dominate the whole spiritual and moral life. When the issue is fairly presented to any soul, God or self, the kingdom or the world, a man's will must accept one side or the other of the alternative. There is and can be no middle ground; we cannot serve God and Mammon. But this supreme choice will inevitably affect all the choices which are subordinate to it, that is to say, all the other choices of the man, with their accompanying volitions and acts. This is a necessity of our moral constitution, and is characteristic of that free personality which makes the difference between man and the animal. Now let a man's supreme

choice have for its end not the true chief end of man, the kingdom of God and His righteousness, but self and the world—let it, in other words, be a sinful choice—and all the man's subordinate choices, with their corresponding volitions and acts, will be influenced by it. There will be a taint of sin in everything that such a man chooses and everything that he does. His moral life is poisoned at the fountain, and every drop in the stream which flows from it is infected. The unregenerate sinner may do many pure and noble acts, but since they are not done with the highest motive, namely, from love to God, there will be this defect in them. God alone may perceive it, but it is there. Such a man may have kept all the commandments from his youth up, yet the Master will say to him, "One thing thou lackest," and that one thing will be the highest good, without which every other good is imperfect and to some extent evil.

This alienation from God involved in a wrong supreme choice, and manifesting itself in all the choices and acts, constitutes that condition which theology technically calls total depravity. The term is an unfortunate one, because it conveys a false, or, at the least, an ambiguous meaning. In the popular conception the word depravity is synonymous with wickedness, and the doctrine of total depravity is supposed to teach that the unconverted man is as wicked as he can be, a monster of sin, in whom there is nothing good. In spite of all assurances to the contrary, many good Christian persons suppose this to be the teaching of orthodox theologians. As soon as a technical term comes to convey a wholly false meaning, it has outlived its usefulness, and there is no reason why we should hold on to this and thereby lay ourselves open to all sorts of misapprehensions. Let the term total depravity go. At the same time, however, we must be careful that we do not, to use the expressive phrase of the Germans, "empty out the child with the bath." By whatever name we call

it, there is a real truth here, of vast importance in our Christian teaching and preaching. The unforgiven sinner stands in a wholly false relation to God, the main purpose of his life is utterly wrong, and every thought and word and act is affected by it. He may be good in all his relations to his fellow-men, so far as the world can judge, but while he is all wrong toward God, there is an evil virus even in these.

In taking this position we need not ignore the good there is in such a man; on the contrary, we ought to be able to appreciate it more truly at its real worth. The good act of an unconverted sinner is better than a bad act. The pure, high, true, and noble deeds of such a person have their intrinsic value, and should receive the commendation of every lover of good and truth. There is a vast amount of real unselfishness and integrity and truthfulness and purity among those who are still separated from God. All this has its moral value, and even its certain reward. Nay, such character and acts may pave the way for a truly Christian life. Often the good lives of unbelievers have been the silver steps up which they have been led by God's grace to the golden throne of a Christian life. The Christian will, if he be a true Christian, be the first to recognize and approve such lives. Doubtless God does the same. There is a profound lesson in the Gospel narrative of our Saviour's meeting with the rich young man. Jesus, we are told, "beholding him, loved him." He was not far from the kingdom of God (Mark x. 21). But when all credit has been given to the good qualities and acts of the unconverted man, there is still left this fatal defect, this deep-lying evil. We need to bear this in mind in our Christian teaching and preaching, and without ceasing, to urge the sinner first of all to be reconciled with God.

The statements I have made need to be somewhat qualified with reference to the points referred to in the begin-

ning of this chapter. In what has been said I have spoken not of infants or little children, but of persons who have reached such a degree of moral maturity as to be able to make the great choice of life. I do not undertake to say when that maturity is reached. Doubtless some attain it much earlier than others. The supreme choice of life does not require the same experience of the world and intellectual advancement as some of the other important choices which we have to make. But the mind develops slowly, and the development of freedom advances *pari passu* with the other powers. It would be doing violence to the simplest facts of psychology to say that little children, who have not reached the point where they can make any of the great choices of life, whose wills are still to a great extent enwrapped in the parental will, and whose choices have to be largely made for them, are wholly alienated from God. Character has not yet been formed, and unity has not come into their moral and spiritual life. They are doubtless sinners and do many things against their consciences; they do those things which they ought not to do, and leave undone those things that they ought to do. But the great issue of life lies before them. If they are being brought up under consecrated parental nurture, their growing freedom may be so guided from stage to stage that they will never wander from the fold of the Good Shepherd; but when the time of full responsibility comes they will, as a matter of course, and with scarcely the consciousness of a struggle, confirm the parental choice of the supreme Good, made for them in their helpless infancy and publicly sealed by baptism. But even if this is not the case, even though all the influences about them may be debasing, they have not yet reached the point of free and deliberate rejection of God. There have been Christians in times past who have taught that little children are totally depraved; perhaps there are those who teach it still. But I need scarcely say that there is

not a hint of such a doctrine in the Bible, and that it finds no support in experience. The little ones are sinners and need a Saviour, but they still are guiltless of the "great transgression." We may say of them, as our Saviour himself said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xix. 14). The modern evangelical church has recognized this truth in its now universal doctrine of the salvation of infants and children dying before the age of responsibility.

Another qualification must be made in our doctrine. It is not to be forgotten that the sinner is still in a state of probation. The condition in which he finds himself is one of mixed influences, sin on one side, God's grace on the other. This is the time of decision, the day of grace. While there is life the gates of mercy remain open and God's invitations are given. The supreme choice may have been made, and made against God, but there are still opportunities and motives to reverse this choice. Men are free, and so long as God gives their freedom the field in which to operate, they can choose in either way. The divine forbearance waits long, and many are the souls who by His grace are brought, after years of sinful living, to give themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not deny that men may, to all intents and purposes, irrevocably commit themselves, even in this life, but the Bible does not seem to me to teach that God utterly forsakes any soul so long as the probationary period continues. But there is a different state of things in the other world. The time of probation is ended. The invitations of God's grace are no longer given. In the sinner's environment there are no holy influences. He is still free. He could, if he would, still turn from sin to God, but in the absence of the motives of God's grace he has no desire to do so, or if he has some feeble desire, it is not deep-rooted in his moral nature. In this state the choice is fixed, and there is a moral certainty that it will remain so. Here, then, we have an alienation from God that is not only complete but fixed

and irremediable. This is a very different state of things from that which exists in this life, with its probationary character, and the two states should not be confounded. (It is one thing to be lost ; it is another to be finally lost.)

III. Moreover, the unforgiven sinner rests under the divine displeasure and is exposed to the divine punishment. I have already touched upon this subject in a previous chapter, but I wish to speak of it more particularly here. We have seen that God's displeasure is the root of all punishment, that it is this which makes the outward evils which befall the sinner punishments in the true sense of the word. Now the "wrath of God," His holy displeasure, abideth on the unforgiven sinner. He is in a state of punishment. All the evils of life bear this character. Death, which hangs over him like a dark pall, or like a coming storm whose black clouds are soon to break over him, is penal to him. Then, in addition to these earthly punishments, the doom of eternal death rests upon him. This is not the place to consider the subject of retribution in all its length and breadth, but it should be asserted here with emphasis. The unforgiven sinner is a doomed man. He has nothing to plead in stay of the punishment which awaits him. He is under condemnation. The divine law, which is holy, just, and good, condemns him, for he has not kept it and is resisting its fundamental command of love to God. Still more does the Gospel of God's grace through Jesus Christ condemn him. To such a man "our God is a consuming fire," and there is "a fearful looking-for of judgment." Practically he is judged already. To all intents and purposes he has judged himself. For judgment is not external to a man, but is rooted in his sin.

But while emphasizing this solemn truth, let me say again that I am not speaking of little children. So far as children are sinners, God's displeasure rests upon them in a degree and to an extent proportionate to their sin and

guilt, both of which I should be far from denying. But God's displeasure is a matter of degree. The displeasure that involves condemnation to eternal punishment may be the same in kind with that which is called forth by the angry word of a three-year-old child, but it is not the same in degree. Eternal punishment is not threatened in the Bible against little children. God punishes them according to their deserts, when He punishes them at all, and we have reason to believe that on the ground of Christ's sacrifice of atonement He saves them when they die in the period of partial responsibility. Moreover, the condition of the unforgiven sinner, as exposed to eternal punishment, is very different from that of the sinner in the other world, who has already entered into his final punishment. God's wrath does not work itself out in this probationary period. He waits still to be gracious. He desireth not the death of the sinner. He mingles even punishment with grace. He is still a Father and bestows upon the prodigal all the love and grace that are possible while he is still recreant. In wrath He still remembers mercy.

IV. Once more, the unconverted sinner is unable to attain his chief end apart from God's redemptive grace. Inability is not inconsistent with freedom. In order that we may choose, the objects of choice must be within our knowledge and our reach. Otherwise we have no motive to choose, and choice without motives is at once irrational and impossible. I am perfectly free to choose to go to London to-morrow, but if I have no money to go, and no reasonable expectation of getting any, if duty and convenience alike keep me here, if, moreover, the thought of going has never entered my mind, I shall be without motives to go, and so unable to use my freedom in choice. But suppose a friend brings me a thousand dollars and tells me how all my work at home may be provided for, and urges me to go on account of my health, and sets be-

fore me the pleasures of the journey, then all at once the choice that was before practically impossible becomes possible. There is no change in my freedom, but there is a great change in the conditions for its operation. Before, I was free but unable—that is, unable to use my freedom. Now, I am both free and able. But mark that the inability under which I labored was not a physical inability but a moral inability.* Now the sinner, by his sin has fallen into a state of inability. He is unable to keep God's law. He is unable to attain salvation. His free-will remains, but he is in no condition to exercise it in this sphere of activity. By his sin he has separated himself from God. But man is so constituted that he cannot attain his chief end apart from God and out of communion with Him. Moreover, he cannot of himself come once more into communion with God. It takes two to make a quarrel and it takes two to make a reconciliation. The sinner must be forgiven and restored to God's favor before he can enter again upon the pursuit of his chief end. But he cannot make God forgive him. God must decide what He will do and what He will not do. It is a condition of things very like what often occurs in our human relations. One man wrongs another and the two become alienated. The wrong-doer may desire to have the old relations restored, but he cannot restore them unless the wronged party comes voluntarily to meet him. He is free, but he is utterly unable to live in the old relations. No physical power is of any avail here. The wall between the two men is an invisible one, but not all the steam-engines in the world could supply power enough to pull it down. Yet let the man who has been wronged say the one word, "I forgive you," and the wall falls of itself. Now, such is our relation to God. We cannot

* "Has the sinner 'power to the contrary?'" What do you mean—power of choice, or power of action? The former he has, the latter he has not. (A pencilled note by the author.)

come back to Him unless He is willing to forgive and restore us, and we are entirely dependent upon him in the matter. If He does not grant His grace, if He does not furnish some basis for reconciliation and offer His forgiveness to us, we must remain forever separated from Him. The inability is not a physical or natural inability; it is a moral inability, but it is stronger than any physical force could render it. The sinner in the presence of the requirements of God's law finds himself compelled to say, in the language of Paul, "I am carnal, sold under sin" (Rom. vii. 14). He is, in the impressive words of the Saviour, "the slave of sin" (John viii. 34). He is also responsible and guilty, for his own sin has brought him into this condition, and we are responsible not only for our choices but for the results of those choices.

This is one of the vital truths of the Christian system. The great central fact of the Gospel, redemption by Christ, is conditioned upon the utter moral helplessness of the sinner apart from Christ. Once teach that he is able in his own strength to work out his salvation, and the whole Gospel system is undermined and brought to destruction. Nevertheless, here, too, we must make some needful qualification. I am speaking here of the mature sinner and not of the child. I do not deny that the corrupt nature which the child inherits is a hindrance to its spiritual career, and that God's grace is needful for the forgiveness of its sins. There is a relative inability in the little child, due rather to nature than to choice, or only partially due to choice, which ought not to be ignored. But the utter helplessness of the fully responsible sinner is not merely the result of nature within and the sinful environment, not merely the result of the sins of infirmity which characterize childhood, but still more the result of his mature free choice. Christ said to his disciples, "Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." I do not believe

that this saying teaches the sinlessness of children, but it does seem to imply that there are hindrances in mature years which are not present in childhood. Yet let me not be misunderstood. I am ready to admit that even the child's sin raises a barrier between it and God which He alone can throw down.

We must not, however, look at the sinner's inability alone and by itself. God has not left His children in the helplessness into which they have fallen. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). Through the Saviour's redemptive work God has provided atonement and reconciliation. What we could not do He has done for us. He so loved the world—this guilty, fallen, helpless world—that He gave His only-begotten Son. Christ has tasted death for every man. His work is universal in its scope. Every hindrance in God to the sinner's reconciliation is removed. It is true that this work of God through Christ is not made known to every man, that there are millions of the human race to whom the blessed Gospel has never come. Nevertheless, we have reason to believe that in some way or other God gives the benefit of Christ's work to every soul, so that no soul is left in its helplessness and guilt. We believe this not because it would not be just for God to leave the sinner to the consequence of his sins—otherwise grace would be no more grace—but because it would not be like God to do so, because it would not be in accordance with the love and mercy which have been revealed through Christ, and because the New Testament gives such abundant reason to regard the work of Christ as universal in its intent. But the sinner is shut up to the way God has opened. "There is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Even those who never learn of Christ here, will, if they are saved, wake up on the other side to find themselves in his arms and cleansed by his blood.

I ought also, as I have done before, to distinguish between the sinner's state under probation and in the other life. The inability under which the unregenerate man labors in this life is indeed absolute in the sense that it shuts him out from all possible self-salvation. But it is, as we have just seen, met and provided for by God's grace. When the divine help comes to him his freedom is perfectly competent to the acceptance which God requires. Like a compass needle which has been held in a wrong position by a concealed mass of iron, but which swings freely when it is removed, the will which has been paralyzed or rendered unable to act by the sinful choice, becomes free to choose under the influence of God's grace. Very different, however, is the state of things in the other world. There the sinner who has rejected the utmost influences of the divine grace, is left to himself, and his inability has nothing to counterbalance it. He is still free, no physical inability prevents his choice, but there is a moral inability which leaves him hopeless. That is the awful feature of that awful state. The sinner is what he is and where he is, because he will not seek God, and yet he is in a position, brought about by his own free choice, where, morally speaking, he cannot do other than he does.

The subject with which we have been engaged gives us our transition to the doctrine of redemption. Already we have to some extent anticipated it. We are thus the better prepared to enter upon the examination of it. We are all sinners. We are in a state of probation. Apart from God's grace we are altogether alienated from our heavenly Father, under His displeasure, doomed to punishment, helpless in our sin. Looking at the one side alone, we may well cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" But blessed be God, we can reply to our own question, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

XX.

THE REDEPTIVE WORK OF CHRIST*

(1. *Revelation and Atonement*)

IN our theological inquiries we have thus far kept steadily in view the chief end of God's plan and of man's existence, the redemptive kingdom of God. We have seen that this chief end implied the existence of sin, not as desired by God, nor as in any way due to His efficiency, but as the result of the abuse of human freedom permitted by God because He meant by His grace to overrule it for a higher good. We have seen that sin is hateful to God, and that it renders the sinner guilty and helpless before Him. Now we have come to the point where we shall consider God's provision for the redemption of the sinner from his sin—or, as I should say, broadening the subject to its full dimensions, for the redemption of the lost and guilty world. It is by this provision that the foundation for God's kingdom has been laid, and that the kingdom has been rendered possible in this world of sinners.

The term redemption, as used in theology, is one of very comprehensive meaning. It includes not only all that God has done and will do for the deliverance of mankind, but the actual deliverance itself. When it is complete, those who have accepted God's grace will be freed from the guilt and power of sin, carried on to their

* For a further presentation of the subject by the author, the reader is referred to a sermon published in *The Word and Work*, Bangor, Me., March, 1892, and to the *Andover Review*, vol. v., p. 44.

spiritual destination, delivered from punishment, made conquerors by the resurrection over death, and made partakers of the heavenly blessedness. The race as a whole will be delivered from sin and all its consequences, and carried forward to its goal. Physical nature, so far as its destiny is bound up with that of man, will be delivered from the bondage of corruption. The sin and evil still left in the universe will be conquered and reduced to complete subjection, and finally excluded from the domain of holiness and love. In a word, the kingdom of God, with the completion of redemption, will have come in all its fulness, and that prayer which Christ taught us will be answered. In this broad sense of the term we shall be concerned with the subject of redemption during all the remainder of our inquiries. It is customary, however, to distinguish between the provision for redemption and the actual carrying out of that provision. The two branches of the divine work are not wholly separable, and no sharp line can be drawn between them. Nevertheless, the distinction is a good one. For the present, then, we shall be engaged only with the first of the two aspects of redemption, namely, the divine provision for the salvation of mankind.

If our time permitted a complete exhibition of the subject, we should go back to the beginnings of human history. The provision for redemption antedated the Fall. Believers were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. i. 4). Our first parents had not been expelled from Paradise when the redemptive work began. To present the subject fully, it would be needful to trace the whole process of divine grace throughout the history of the Old Dispensation. But for our purposes it will be sufficient to consider the work of Jesus Christ the Redeemer. In him and his work the whole redemption is concentrated. All that preceded finds its fulfilment and its deepest meaning in his saving deeds.

I. It is important that we should understand Christ's work in its completeness. It is so large, so many-sided, and so comprehensive, that we are apt to look only at individual aspects of it, and as a result to fall into imperfect and even erroneous views respecting it. The traditional theology has endeavored to avoid this danger by distinguishing three factors in the Saviour's work, namely, what he did as a Prophet, a Priest, and a King. These so-called "offices" of Christ do not furnish us with an exhaustive analysis of his works, but they are admirably fitted to guard us against the one-sided view of which I have spoken, and most theologians avail themselves of their use. We say substantially the same thing when we distinguish in the Saviour's work the elements of revelation, atonement, and direct work in and upon individuals and the world.

These three factors in the Saviour's work may in a general way be arranged chronologically. His public ministry on earth is especially connected with his prophetic activity. His priestly work is naturally associated with his death. The resurrection and ascension were the introduction to his kingly functions in their highest exercise. Nevertheless, while this is the case, all three elements are present during the whole of the Saviour's official activity. One is more prominent than the rest, but all are there. Everywhere in the cord by which the Saviour has bound together heaven and earth these three strands are visible. During his ministry Christ not only revealed God and preached the Gospel; he also took upon him the sins of mankind and shared their sufferings, he interceded for them with the Father, and as a Ruler over nature and man he performed his miracles, drew all men unto him and exercised royal dominion over all who were of the truth. The death of Christ not only effected atonement, but was a profound revelation of the divine love and a glorification of the Saviour (John xii. 23; xiii. 31), so that in a true sense the cross was his throne. Now that

he sits at God's right hand and rules as the Messiah over the universe and in his church, he reveals the divine character and will through his Spirit, and in his priestly intercession carries on his atoning sacrifice.

It is needful that we should keep in mind all these features of the Saviour's redemption. In all these ways he saves us. If any one of the three great factors in his work be neglected, our understanding of this great doctrine will be imperfect. Almost all the errors into which theologians have fallen upon this subject have resulted from asserting one of the three elements at the expense of the rest. It has been thus especially that confusion has been introduced into the doctrine of the atonement. The subject of Christ's redemptive work is a large and complicated one. It is easy to become so absorbed in the details as to lose sight of the great outlines. We shall do well to be on our guard against the danger.

But while all of these factors in Christ's saving work need to be borne in mind, it is to be noted that a special and central importance belongs to the atonement. In this, as in neither of the others, the saving power of Christ's redemption is concentrated. The revelation is pre-eminently a disclosure of God's atoning love. The kingly functions of the ascended Lord are based upon the atonement and involve its application to mankind. The death of Jesus is the great central fact of redemption. There is a sense in which we can know nothing, while engaged with this doctrine, but Christ and him crucified.

II. We shall look first at Christ's work as revelation—the so-called prophetic office. Old Testament prophecy—taking the term in its larger sense as inclusive of all the divine self-revelation through inspired men—anticipates and prepares the way for this part of our Saviour's work. We can, indeed, say with truth, that the prophecy of the Old Dispensation was itself his work, since the prophets uttered their messages through the "Spirit of

Christ" (1 Pet. i. 11). The divine Logos from the first manifested God to men. In the Saviour's ministry, as has already been stated, the prophetic function was the most prominent one.

Among the various forms of Christ's work as revelation the first which meets us is his doctrine. He was pre-eminently a teacher. He came to men not only with the divine grace, but with the divine truth, not only with life, but with light (John i. 4, 14). From the first the Word plays a most important part in the work of redemption. Men cannot be saved by truth alone. Socrates thought that they could, and that all that is needful for mankind in order to moral betterment is the knowledge of what is right; but his theory failed in practice because men are not merely ignorant, but also wilfully sinful. Yet truth has its place in the work of salvation. It is the pioneer; it opens the way for the entrance of the divine grace. Because men are rational they must be approached through the reason; thus only can access be gained to the heart. Christianity has always had a preaching element in it, and always will have until its task is completed. The subject of Christ's teaching was the Gospel—the glad tidings of salvation. He proclaimed the coming of God's kingdom, and made known the conditions of entrance to it. He taught men the high and blessed truth of God's Fatherhood. He taught them their own sin and the abounding mercy and forgiveness of God. He told them of his atoning death and the eternal life through him. He unrolled to them the future of his kingdom. How could the saving work be accomplished if Christ had not bestowed upon mankind this precious truth of the Gospel?

Again, there was a revelation through Christ's person. I have treated this subject in the chapters on Christology, and may, therefore, pass lightly over it here. But it is a most important element in the redemptive work. Christ himself, this divine man, was to his contemporaries and

to all ages a source of the profoundest knowledge which man has ever received. He was a revelation of God. His words to Philip point to this great truth: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). A new conception of the divine love and righteousness and truth dawned upon the minds of those who saw and heard him, as it dawns upon us to-day as we read the Gospels.

Moreover, he revealed man to himself. In him the ideal of humanity became real. It is here that we come into contact with the doctrine of Christ's example, which is so frequently taught in the New Testament and impressed with so much earnestness. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii. 5). "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21). The example of Christ has been represented by Unitarians as constituting the essence of his atonement, and as a result evangelical Christians have felt a certain shyness about giving the doctrine its place among the elements of the redemptive work. But unquestionably it has a place among them. The fault lies not in saying that we are saved by the example of Christ, for that is perfectly true as far as it goes, but in stopping short there and making that the whole. The "imitation of Christ" is necessary to the full salvation of the Christian, though it must be based upon his atoning sacrifice and his kingly grace bestowed through the Holy Spirit. The "new-man," the "Christ formed within" the Christian, is the reproduction of the perfect manhood revealed to us in the Saviour's holy life.

Once more, there was a revelation through the works of Christ which forms a part of his redemptive activity. His miracles, as has already been shown, were of this nature. They made known the redemptive grace of God and Christ to men in the most striking and convincing of ways. In them the final redemption of nature was guar-

anted and the salvation of the soul illustrated and proved by the salvation of the body. Nor need we confine our thought to the miracles. All the deeds of the Christ were a revelation. His ways were God's ways, and they were ways of grace and truth. We see on the small scale of the Master's earthly ministry what God is doing on the large scale in the redemptive work of the ascended Christ. The death of Christ, the great atoning deed, is the crowning revelation.

III. We come now to Christ's work as atonement—his priestly office. By his atonement we mean that part of his redemptive work which had for its object the securing of the forgiveness of human sin, or the provision for reconciliation. It is to be carefully noted that the atonement is not the same as the reconciliation. The former opens the way for the latter and makes it possible; the latter can come only as the result of the former. The atonement is that element in Christ's work by which it was made morally possible for God to be just and the sinner's Justifier (Rom. iii. 26), the atoning act was the death of Christ upon the cross.

I shall devote the remainder of this chapter to the presentation of the scriptural teachings respecting the Saviour's atoning work, leaving to the next the more distinctively doctrinal treatment of the subject.

1. The doctrine of the atonement has its roots in the Old Testament. None of the great truths of Christianity is more fully anticipated and foreshadowed in the earlier revelation than this. We may distinguish at least four distinct lines of approach to the New Testament doctrine.

The first of these is found—as the accepted designation of the office of Christ which we are considering indicates—in the Old Testament institution of priesthood, and especially in the high-priesthood. The priests differed greatly from the two other classes of functionaries, the prophets and kings. These latter represented God before men in

revelation and government. The priests, on the contrary, though in like manner appointed by God, represented men before God. It was their duty to stand between the sinful people and the holy Being against whom they had transgressed, and to present the sacrifices which the Law prescribed for the removal of guilt and the obtaining of forgiveness. Theoretically all the Israelites were priests, as they were prophets and kings, but practically, since they were all sinful and thus far from the ideal, only a single tribe were designated to this office, and of this tribe only a single family performed the more sacred offices of the priesthood. Everything in the priestly ordinances and ritual tended to emphasize their holiness. They must be without physical blemish, of blameless life, and during the exercise of their priestly functions must refrain from wine or strong drink. They were solemnly consecrated and set apart to their office, with rites which were intended to bring distinctly into view the sacredness of their work. At their head was the high-priest, the great official representative of the people in matters of sin and atonement and in the sacrificial ritual. It was he who went once a year into the holy of holies of the tabernacle and temple and presented the sacrificial blood before the mercy-seat, upon which appeared the Shekhina, the visible token of the divine presence.

The second line of approach to the New Testament doctrine of atonement is closely related to the first. It is found in the Old Testament sacrificial system. The essential idea of sacrifice is self-surrender. Man expresses his dependence upon God and devotion to Him by the gift of something precious to him. The gift symbolizes and declares the gift of his will, himself, to God. But since men are sinners and separated from God something more than this is necessary. Some atonement must be rendered that so the divine displeasure may be removed, the offender's sin forgotten, and he be restored to fellow-

ship with God. In the sacrifices of the heathen the need of atonement is expressed and an attempt is made to render it. The Jewish sacrificial system differs from the heathen in that it is a divine provision for meeting this human need. The virtue of the offering lies not in its intrinsic value, but in the divine ordainment on the ground of which it is offered and accepted. God gave to His children this method of securing forgiveness for their sins. The blood of bulls and of goats accomplished nothing, but was made the means by which the repentant soul obtained God's blessing; God gave it its value as an atonement.

Let us stop for a moment to look at the ritual of the sin-offering, in which the idea of atonement is expressed with especial fulness. The offerer brought an animal, of certain prescribed kinds and without blemish, to the tabernacle or temple, and presented it for sacrifice. He laid his hands upon its head and solemnly set it apart for its appointed use. It was to be his offering, to take his place before God. He then killed it. The priest, who was standing by, caught the blood in a basin and presented it to God by carrying it into the holy place and sprinkling or rubbing it upon the horns of the altar. The significance of the act lay in the use that was made of the blood. "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life" (Lev. xvii. 11). This is the key-passage which opens the Old Testament doctrine. The word translated atonement means a covering. The pure blood of the victim is represented as covering before God the impure life of the sinner, and so making it possible and right for God to forgive him. The symbolism of the sacrifice is "a life for a life," vicarious atonement, atonement by substitution. Not that there is a real and valid substitution here; therein lies the imperfection of the animal sacrifice and the prophecy of a better

sacrifice ; but God graciously accepts it as sufficient. The sacrifice is a sacrament, " the visible sign of an invisible grace ; " its atoning power is of God's appointment and rests upon an atonement not yet revealed. I have said that the sacrifice involves substitution, that it is vicarious. But let me not be misunderstood. I do not wish to teach, as some do, that we are to find in it a vicarious punishment, a penal substitution. It has been said that in the symbolism of the sacrifice the victim bears the punishment of death due to the sinner. Of this there is not a hint in the Old Testament. It is not a death for a death, or a punishment for a punishment, but a life for a life. Vicarious atonement and vicarious punishment are not the same thing.

A third and very important line of approach to the New Testament doctrine is to be found in the teachings respecting the suffering Messiah. Alongside of the teachings of the prophets respecting the Messiah's kingly glory there runs a sadder strain, a prediction of pains and labors and even death to be endured, of rejection and insult from his own people. The twenty-second Psalm narrates in language which seems more like history than prophecy the incidents of the crucifixion. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah recounts the sufferings of the Servant of God, " despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." It tells us in unmistakable language the story of his vicarious death for our sins, how " he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities," how " the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed," how " the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The circumstances of his shameful death are predicted. The prophet calls him a " guilt-offering," and declares that " he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors." It would be difficult to express in a clearer language the idea of a vicarious atonement.

I pass over the other predictions regarding the suffering Messiah (such as Zech. xii. 10-13 ; xiii. 7), and turn to the last element in the Old Testament preparation for our doctrine, namely, the teachings respecting intercession. All through the earlier dispensations there are intimations of the truth that God's servants, who are dear to Him, can stand between Him and their sinful brethren and secure forgiveness for them. To use the Old Testament phraseology, such an intercessor, where his plea is accepted, renders atonement for his client's sin (Ex. xxxii. 30 ; Numbers xxv. 13). Abraham, Moses, Phinehas, Samuel, and David are represented as thus making intercession, standing before God in this vicarious capacity as the representatives of their sinful fellow-men. The underlying idea is the same as that of the priesthood ; but there is this difference, that while the priests brought outward and tangible offerings of atonement, the intercessor brought his own will, a spiritual sacrifice, to atone for his brother's sin.

2. We come now to the New Testament teachings respecting the Saviour's atoning work. Here we are perplexed by the embarrassment of riches. No doctrine of the Christian system is more fully taught than this. The Saviour's death, "Christ crucified," is the great theme of the New Testament, as through type and prediction it is the hope of the Old. It is also taught distinctly. A fair and intelligent exegesis cannot fail to find in the teachings of Christ and the Apostles upon this subject the doctrine of a vicarious atonement, that is, an atonement through substitution. I make this assertion with the knowledge that it will be disputed by many evangelical scholars, but with the full conviction that it is true—though in thus speaking, let me again disclaim any thought of asserting that the Bible teaches the doctrine of "penal substitution," as it is called.

Let us begin with the first three Gospels. The angels

who announce the Saviour's advent foretell his redemptive work. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). "There is born to you this day, in the city of David, a Saviour" (Luke ii. 11). The Master did not speak of his death and its meaning as an atonement in the earlier part of his ministry. Here was a truth too deep and mysterious for his disciples to bear at first. But it is interesting to notice that as soon as he had in some measure dispelled the false notions of the Twelve respecting his Messiahship, and had received from Peter, as their spokesman, the great Confession, he began to tell them of the death which "it was necessary" that he should suffer, and of the cross which was to teach mankind that "whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and that whosoever shall lose his life . . . shall find it" (Matt. xvi. 21-26). On the solemn Mount of Transfiguration, when a glimpse is given to the awe-struck disciples of the kingly glory of the Messiah and his relation to the Old Dispensation, the subject of conversation between the Saviour and the two representatives of the older revelation is "his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke ix. 31). The references to his death now grow more frequent. The unseemly ambition of some of his followers and the jealousy of others gave occasion for the saying that "the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45). The word "ransom" designates the price paid for the release of the firstborn of Israel, who were dedicated to God, or for the redemption of a slave from bondage (Numb. xviii. 15, 16; xxxv. 31, 32; Lev. xxv. 47-55). In the Hebrew the same root is employed to convey the idea of atonement. The idea conveyed in the Saviour's words is that of substitution, the vicarious idea. His life was to be the price paid for the deliverance of men from sin, a price that was at the same time a sacrifice.

Amid the sacred scenes of the Last Supper, and in connection with the institution of the rite which was to be to Christians in all ages a solemn memorial of Christ, he still further unbosomed himself. The sacrificial system which was prominently before their minds in connection with the Passover meal which they were now eating, was about to be done away, because the antitype had come and the type was no longer needful. The symbol was to find its fulfilment and realization. As the Old Dispensation in its legal form had been founded upon sacrifice, so was the New presently to be. Slaughtered beasts furnished the blood of the Old Covenant (Ex. xxiv. 3-8); the blood of Christ himself was to be shed for the institution of that New Covenant, promised by the prophets (Jer. xxxi. 31-34), and now about to be realized. His death was the vicarious atonement which effected all that the old sacrificial system symbolized, and established the kingdom of God—or, to put it into the simplest language, his death was to secure for mankind the forgiveness of sins and open the way for their complete salvation from the guilt and power of sin. The rite he now instituted was to be the constant reminder of this truth, as well as a means by which the benefits of the Saviour's death might be bestowed upon believers. "This is my body broken for you." "This is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 26-29, and parallel passages). The importance of this testimony cannot be overestimated. One of the two great rites of the Christian church is built upon the doctrine of the Trinity; the other upon the doctrine of vicarious atonement. The agony in the Garden gives us a hint of the mysterious nature of the Saviour's death. It was not an ordinary death. His words of intercession for his enemies, uttered on the cross, permit us to look far into the atoning consciousness of the Saviour (Luke xxiii. 34). His cry of anguish, "My God, my God, why hast thou for-

saken me?" reveals the vicarious sufferer immersed in the tide of human sin and divine punishment, so as for a moment to seem to himself, though not in reality, under the divine displeasure as resting on himself personally.

In John's Gospel we find material for the understanding of our doctrine no less important than that furnished by the Synoptical evangelists. At the beginning of the Saviour's ministry the Baptist publicly denominated him "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," identifying him with the Servant of God predicted in Isaiah, of whom it is said that he was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter," and that he should "make his soul a trespass-offering" (Isa. liii. 7, 10), representing him as the vicarious sufferer and sacrifice for human sin. So later in the Saviour's ministry, the high-priest, Caiaphas, prophesying in his official capacity, and with a depth of meaning far beyond his own thought, foretold his vicarious death for his people. John reports a number of striking utterances of Jesus bearing upon his atonement. In his discourse with Nicodemus Christ compared his death upon the cross to the brazen serpent which Moses at God's command raised in the wilderness for the healing of the stricken Israelites: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life" (John iii. 14 seq.; Numb. xxi. 4-9). He declares that he is "the bread of life," and adds by way of explanation, "the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John vi. 51). He likens himself to the Good Shepherd, who giveth or layeth down his life for the sheep, a life which he says he lays down of himself, since he has the right to lay it down and to take it again (John x. 11, 15, 18). He illustrated his death by the simile of the grain of wheat which bears its fruit only when it is cast into the earth and dies, declared that the hour of his death was

the hour of his glorification, and in full assurance of his coming victory over the powers of evil said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John xii. 24-33). At the last interview with his disciples he told them that he was about to lay down his life in behalf of his friends. The so-called "high-priestly prayer," which John has recorded in the seventeenth chapter of his Gospel, shows us with what thoughts and aspirations the Saviour looked forward to his approaching death. Speaking of the disciples he said, "For their sake I sanctify myself," employing the word which designated the consecration of the sacrificial victim about to be offered upon the altar.

I am at a loss how to select among the many references to the Saviour's atoning death in the other books of the New Testament. The doctrine underlies all the apostolic teaching and preaching. It is of fundamental importance in Paul's great doctrine of justification by faith. After having shown in the opening chapters of the Epistle to the Romans that Gentiles and Jews alike have "sinned and come short of the glory of God," he goes on to declare that men can be justified and forgiven only by God's grace "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by his blood" (Rom. iii. 24, 25). Redemption, propitiation, blood—the terms are taken from the ritual ordinances of the Old Dispensation, and represent Christ's death as a vicarious or sacrificial atonement. No language could be used which would more distinctly convey this idea to a Jewish mind. Moreover, he gives the reason why God has thus "set forth" Christ as an atoning sacrifice, "to show his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 25, 26). The

righteousness spoken of is God's judicial righteousness, which seems to have suffered detriment from human sin, but which is now shown to have received atonement through the death of Christ, with the result that God can without injury to His holiness give free play to His forgiving grace toward all those who believe in the crucified and living Lord. There is abundant proof without this passage of the doctrine before us, but there is no statement of it in the New Testament more full and unequivocal than this. Here, as nowhere else, the death of Christ is represented, to borrow the words of Tholuck, as "the divine *Theodicée*," the vindication of the divine justice in the forgiveness of sins.

In the fifth chapter of the same epistle Paul shows how the atonement has its origin in the undeserved love of God, who "commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (v. 8). If we are ever tempted to yield to that popular and yet most erroneous idea that in the doctrine of the atonement God the Father is represented as the angry God, to whom God the Son makes propitiation, this passage should disprove it. The atonement originates in the love of the Father, as the holiness to which the atonement is made belongs to the Son equally with the Father: "God so loved the world that he gave his Son." The Saviour's work is here represented as a finished reconciliation. By it God has come into an attitude of reconciliation toward men. The atonement is objective, the reconciliation made once for all. In potency and promise the race is reconciled to God, and all that individual sinners have to do is by faith to accept the reconciliation (vv. 10, 11). In the great parallel between Adam and Christ which follows, Paul shows that the benefits which have accrued to mankind from Christ's work (which is here called his "obedience") far exceed the evils that have been entailed by the Fall, and carries further the thought

that the race stands in a redeemed relation to God through Christ—a relation which of course does not relieve the individual from the necessity of personal faith as the sole condition of sharing in the saving benefits of this relation (Rom. v. 12–21). In the same epistle Paul shows that the final cause of the atonement is holiness, or the fulfilment of God's will in His kingdom: "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 3, 4).

I will allude to only one more passage out of the many which occur in the Pauline writings. It is that in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (v. 14–21), where the Apostle urges the great Christian motive arising from the love of Christ manifested in his atoning death. He died for all, and so close is his relation to all that it may be truly said that all died in his death. Since he performed the atoning act in their behalf it was constructively their act. In this passage he once more represents Christ's work as a finished reconciliation: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." He has given to His servants the administration of this reconciliation. They go to sinful men with the offer of it, beseeching them that, since God has done His part, they will do theirs and "be reconciled to God." Then he further describes the atonement in words which unmistakably teach its vicarious or substitutional character, though leaving the origination, and in large part the execution, in God's hands, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him"—that is, God put the sinless One in some true sense into the sinner's place, treating him as if he were a sinner, that the sinner through faith in him might be in some true sense put into his place, and though sinful be treated as if righteous. This is not vicarious

punishment, but at the very least it is vicarious atonement.

The unknown author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has given us a complete and most important exposition of Christ's atoning death in its relation to the Old Testament ceremonial system. He follows especially upon those two lines of approach to the New Testament doctrine, of which mention has already been made, the high-priesthood and the sacrifices. Christ in his death is at once high-priest and sacrifice; he presents the atonement and is the atonement. He is "a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb. ii. 17). For this office the Saviour was prepared by his temptations and sufferings (ii. 18; v. 8). His superiority to the high-priest of the Old Testament is demonstrated. He is a high-priest after a different order, namely, that of Melchizedek (v. 1-10). He did not need to offer up sacrifices for his own sins, seeing that he was sinless, but made one all-sufficient sacrifice when he offered up himself (vii. 26, 27). The Old Testament sacrifices were intrinsically insufficient; "the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin" (x. 4). But Christ was the perfect sacrifice. The old sacrifices had to be offered over and over again. The high-priest year after year went into the holy of holies with the sacrificial blood on the great day of atonement. But Christ has been offered once for all a perfect sacrifice that needs not to be repeated. The virtue of his sacrifice lay in the perfect surrender of his will to God, "by the which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all" (x. 5-10). So having offered one sacrifice for sins forever, he has sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet (x. 12, 13). One has to give a new meaning to the whole Old Testament system in order to find any other doctrine in

this wonderful epistle than that of a vicarious atonement.

The passages in the epistles of Peter emphasize the same aspects of truth, so fully brought out in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the writings of Paul. The two ideas of redemption and sacrifice are continually in this apostle's mind (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). He describes the Saviour's death in language that is an echo of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah: "Who his own self bear our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pet. ii. 24). And in words which remind us of the fifth chapter of Second Corinthians, he tells us how "Christ also suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18).

It remains only to speak of the Apostle John. The truth which he records in the utterances of our Saviour, as given in his Gospel, is amply confirmed by his own declarations in his other writings. In the First Epistle he teaches that "the blood of Jesus his (God's) Son cleanseth us from all sin" (i. 7). He tells us that Christ is "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (ii. 2). "He laid down his life for us" (iii. 16). "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (iv. 10). Notice how the atonement or propitiatory sacrifice is represented as originating in the love of God. In the Apocalypse Christ is represented as he "that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood" (Rev. i. 6). He is "a Lamb as though it had been slain" (v. 6), and this is his common designation throughout the book, giving prominence to the atonement even in the heavenly state. The Lamb is the light and the glory of the New Jerusalem.

I have not as yet entered into any of those problems which have made the doctrine of the atonement a theo-

logical battle-field. But I think that enough has been said to show that the Bible contains a distinct and unequivocal truth to teach on the subject. It does not tell us in what the inmost essence of the atonement consists. It gives us but imperfect glimpses into the heart of the mystery. But it does give us a doctrine, and that, one capable of being stated in simple and definite language. It is the doctrine of a vicarious atonement—that is, that Jesus Christ has rendered to God the amends for our sins which we cannot render ourselves, and yet which is due from us, and that thus he has rendered it consistent with God's holiness to grant us forgiveness and restore us to His favor. I said that Christ has done this for us. Rather let me say that God Himself has done it for us, through Christ. In this great and sacred truth the universal church is one.

XXI.

THE REDEPTIVE WORK OF CHRIST

(2. *The Work of Atonement*)

WHATEVER view may be taken of the Emperor Constantine's vision of the flaming cross—whether it was a real experience, or, as one of the most recent ecclesiastical historians suggests, an “optical illusion,” or, to be explained as a legend of later growth—it points to a great truth. The cross symbolizes what is most essential and sacred in Christianity. It was not without reason that the *labarum* was carried as the standard of the first Christian armies, and that the Crusaders wore the sign of the cross on shoulder or breast. It has not been without reason that the church in all ages has made the cross its emblem. To-day, as in the days of Constantine, we conquer by this sign. But in taking the cross as its symbol, the Christian church has given to the doctrine of the atonement a central and unique place among the truths which it teaches. By this doctrine, as by no other, it stands or falls. I say this with no thought of detriment to the immemorial Protestant claim that the doctrine of justification by faith is the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiæ*, the fundamental article of Christian faith, for this doctrine is rooted in the atonement and receives all its significance from it. We cannot, without surrendering what is most essential in Christianity, treat the truth of Christ's atonement lightly or regard it as of secondary importance. It is our duty to uphold it in its integrity and to seek to penetrate, as far as may be, into its deepest

meaning, and at the same time to give our best efforts to commend it as reasonable to the acceptance of those Christians who are hindered by intellectual or practical difficulties from accepting it, as well as to defend it against the attacks of the opponents of Christianity.

I. I wish to speak first of the history of the doctrine, and hope to be able so to present the facts, even in this brief survey, as to show that, in spite of differences respecting the theological explanation of the doctrine, and of some temporary aberrations from the scriptural teachings, the church in all ages has held the essence and core of this great truth.

In the earlier centuries of the church's history attention was concentrated upon problems very different from that of the atonement. The person of Christ, the Trinity, sin and grace, and the nature of the church and the sacraments, were the subjects about which the primitive controversies were waged. The central importance of the Saviour's redemptive work was everywhere recognized, and the absolute necessity of his death in order to human salvation universally taught. Just as to-day the ordinary Christian, uninstructed in systematic theology yet mighty in the Scriptures, declares with a true and vigorous grasp on the essential truth of the atonement, that his

“Hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;”

so it was with the early church, which with profound conviction and unvarying constancy affirmed, chiefly in scriptural language, that the Saviour's death upon the cross was the vicarious sacrifice for human sin, without an interest in which no man could enter the kingdom of God. In connection with this simple unscientific faith there are anticipations, consisting rather in hints than in systematic doctrinal statements, of almost all the great theories of the atonement which have attracted attention in later times.

The first theory of the atonement which deserves to bear the name is that which represents Christ's death as God's ransom paid to Satan for the deliverance of the souls of men. This singular view, which was first advanced by the two great Fathers of the Church, Origen (died 254 A.D.) and Gregory of Nyssa (died about 400 A.D.), and which was very generally held in the church from the fifth century to the twelfth, was based upon the assumption that men, in consequence of sin, have fallen into the rightful power of Satan. God, who is righteous, must respect the rights even of Satan. In order, therefore, that justice may be maintained, and yet the lost race delivered, God sent His Son into the world and offered Satan, in the person of the God-man, endowed with miraculous power, a prize more valuable than the whole race. Satan, accepted Christ in exchange for mankind, and the transfer was made in the Saviour's death. The race was delivered, and Satan found in Christ a servant who straightway became his Master, overthrowing his power, and in the resurrection and ascension triumphing gloriously. The grotesqueness of this singular view lies upon the surface; but there is a clear recognition in it of the vicarious character of Christ's work, its relation to the divine love and justice, and its absolute necessity. The vessel was altogether an earthen one, sure sooner or later to be broken, but it did contain and preserve the golden truth.

A far higher key was struck by the great Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm, in the eleventh century (A.D. 1033 A.D. 1109). According to his "satisfaction theory" God is bound to maintain his honor in the face of human sin, and can do so only by punishing the sinner or else receiving from him an adequate atonement or "satisfaction"—which latter was viewed, in accordance with the legal principles of the time, under the conception of a money payment. Sinful men cannot themselves make satisfaction, for sin involves infinite guilt, since it is committed

against an infinite Being. In this extremity of man God finds His opportunity. The divine Son becomes incarnate. *Cur Deus Homo?* is the question which forms the title of Anselm's treatise, Why did God become man? The atonement is the answer: only God could make a sufficient atonement, yet it could be a human satisfaction only if made by a man. The essence of the atonement, according to Anselm, consists in the Saviour's voluntary obedience to God in submitting to the death of the cross. As a sinless man he did not need to die. So his death upon the cross was a work of supererogation, to which his own divine nature gave an infinite value, and which received from God an infinite reward. He did not need this reward for himself, since as divine he had no wants. He therefore passed it over to the account of his human brethren, and God accepted it as the full satisfaction for their sin. It is impossible not to admire the ethical and spiritual greatness of this theory. In some of its subordinate details it shows the theological limitations of the time, and of the Roman Catholic church, in which it originated; but in all its great outlines it has maintained itself, and will continue to do so, as expressing the deepest thought of the Christian church respecting the Saviour's atoning work.

The Reformation brought still another theory, which is often, but quite erroneously, identified with the Anselmic. It is what is often called the theory of "penal substitution." Anselm represented God as standing between the two alternatives, punishment or satisfaction. The Reformation theory insists on punishment in any case, on satisfaction through punishment. The only alternatives which it admits are, the punishment of the sinner, or the punishment of a substitute. God chooses the latter alternative and sends His Son into the world that he may become the sinner's substitute in punishment. The God-man takes the sinner's place, obeys for him the broken law of God,

and suffers for him the punishment of death. According to the strict Calvinistic view, he does not do this for all men, but only for the elect. Those who hold the theory of penal substitution agree with Anselm in teaching that the divine nature of Christ gave to his death an infinite value. The Reformers themselves taught that Christ suffered not only the punishment of physical death, but also that of hell. Calvin says, "It was necessary for him to contend with the powers of hell and the horror of eternal death. . . . He suffered in his soul the dreadful torments of a person condemned and irretrievably lost" (Calvin's "Institutes," Bk. II., ch. xvi; sect. 10, 11). Later advocates of the theory have contented themselves with teaching that the divine nature of Christ gave to his physical sufferings and death a value sufficient to counterbalance both the temporal and eternal sufferings to which the elect are justly condemned. The Saviour bears the punishment, and the sinner who accepts his work by faith goes free, while in virtue of Christ's vicarious obedience to the divine law, God justifies him or treats him as righteous. No one who realizes how much good has been accomplished in the world by means of this theory, and how deeply interwoven it is with the most sacred aspirations and experiences of multitudes of Christian believers, will speak of it in any other tone than that of respect. It conveys the great essential truth of a vicarious atonement, and makes the sinner absolutely dependent upon Christ for his salvation. Yet it may be doubted whether it is not a retrogression from the Anselmic view rather than an advance upon it. We may question whether the Scriptures require us to hold that the Father punished the Son, in any strict sense of the word punishment. And yet I gladly admit that this theory includes the essentials of the doctrine.

The attacks of the Socinians upon the theory of penal substitution led to several interesting attempts to modify

it. The Arminians regarded Christ's death rather as a vicarious sacrifice than as a substituted punishment. They did not claim that its intrinsic value was such as to make it a sufficient atonement for human sin. Rather they taught that it derived its value from the divine acceptance of it. God, who was graciously pleased to accept the sacrifices of the Old Testament, as sufficient, has done the same in the case of the far more valuable, yet still intrinsically inadequate sacrifice of Christ. As was to be expected, this Arminian theory, while capable of being so stated as to include all the essential features of the scriptural doctrine, tended to reduce the atonement to a matter of only relative necessity; for if the value of the Saviour's death was due to the divine acceptance of it, the question was readily raised, Why might not God do without it altogether, and accept the reformation of the sinner as a sufficient atonement? Accordingly, this theory gave place in many quarters to the moral influence view, of which mention is presently to be made.

One of the most interesting, and on the whole influential, of the modern attempts to explain the doctrine of the atonement, is the so-called "governmental theory." This was first advanced by the Dutch jurist, Grotius, in the first half of the seventeenth century. It reappeared under a somewhat modified form, and wholly independently of the Grotian theology, in connection with that remarkable theological movement, beginning near the middle of the last century, and reaching in its fruitful results down to the present time, which we call the New England theology. This theory rests upon the distinction between God's distributive justice, which is concerned with the divine rewards and punishments in their relation to personal character and desert, and His general or rectoral justice, which is synonymous with the holiness or love of God, and which is concerned with God's government as intended to secure the best good of all intelligent be-

ings. Distributive justice demands the punishment of the sinner; but distributive justice is subordinate to general justice and may be passed over in the interests of the latter. Now the sufferings and death of Christ were a divine provision for the satisfaction of God's general justice, inasmuch as they manifested God's hatred of sin and showed His earnestness in threatening it with punishment. They rendered it consistent with the interests of God's government to pass over the claims of distributive justice and to pardon the sinner. According to this view Christ did not bear the sinner's punishment, but a substitute for that punishment; his sufferings and death answered the same ends as would have been answered by the sinner's punishment. Distributive justice, indeed, always continues to demand the sinner's punishment; but general justice determines the divine attitude toward the sinner. This theory was the result of a reaction against the doctrine of penal substitution and labors under certain defects which were scarcely to be avoided under the circumstances. It emphasizes the manward side of the atonement so strongly as to make it easy to forget the Godward aspect. But, rightly understood, it includes and does justice to both sides, and conserves the essential truth of the scriptural doctrine.

I have referred to the "moral influence" theory. This made its appearance in the Middle Ages, when it was advanced by the great, but erratic, theologian and philosopher, Abelard. It has made its appearance many times during the later history of the church, always as a reaction from the more extreme and rigorous aspects of the orthodox doctrine. It is simply stated, and from its freedom from the ethical difficulties which hinder many minds from fully accepting the common doctrine, has found wide acceptance. This view denies that the death of Christ is an atonement in the strict sense of the word, that is, a necessary condition and prerequisite to the

removal of the hindrances in the divine holiness to the forgiveness of sin. It views the death of Christ rather under the category of revelation than of atonement, as a part of his prophetic rather than of his priestly office. It is the great manifestation of the divine love, the pledge to men of God's eternal readiness to forgive the returning sinner. The divine justice needs no other satisfaction than the repentance and reformation of the sinner. This theory was presented with great power and beauty by Horace Bushnell in his "Vicarious Sacrifice;" but he found it insufficient, and afterward supplemented it by a view which finds in God's self-sacrifice, or "making cost" for sinners, an atonement in some true sense of the word made by God to Himself—a theory which once worked out with due regard to Christ's human nature and his representative relation to mankind, would inevitably approximate to the Catholic doctrine. The moral influence theory exhibits an unquestioned truth which has been too much neglected by the other forms of doctrine, namely, the manifestation of the divine love in the atonement. But it does not give us the atonement itself in any real meaning of the word. It fails to give us any satisfactory explanation of the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses of the third chapter of Romans.

I can do no more than allude to the most suggestive and deeply spiritual work on the subject of the atonement which has appeared in recent times, that of Dr. J. Macleod Campbell, in which he explains the atonement as a vicarious repentance and confession of sin—a view which will not stand the test of careful theological analysis, but which gives helpful hints in the direction of a clearer recognition of the spiritual and ethical elements in the atonement. I must also content myself with the bare mention of the theories which identify the atonement with the reconciliation or the at-one-ment, according to the etymology of the word, between man and God, first

in the holy life of Jesus, by which the kingdom of God is restored in his person, and then in the restoration of sinners through the power of the risen Lord working through his Spirit.

II. Modern theology has begun to learn the true lesson which the history of doctrine has to teach us, namely, that in all the earnest efforts which the church has made to come to an understanding of the great truths which revelation has bestowed upon it, there has been something of good, something worthy of recognition and preservation. What we need most of all to do is to subject the various theories to a careful and appreciative criticism, to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good. The remark we hear so often made, that we need all the theories of the atonement, is indicative of this wholesome tendency. A doctrine so large and many-sided, that reaches so deeply into the central mysteries of the Christian system, cannot be adequately expressed in any one form of words.

It is in this spirit that I desire to attempt a doctrinal statement, which shall in some measure bring together the elements of the great truth which we have been considering, as we find them in the Scriptures and in the speculations of Christian thinkers. I have no theory to give. Enough if I can give a far-off glimpse of that building of God, that sacred truth itself, which all the theories only reveal in part.

The atonement originated in the love of God. He meant to establish His kingdom in the sinful world. But sin stood in the way of this end of His plan and works. The establishment of the kingdom is impossible without the restoration of sinners. The first step toward complete salvation is forgiveness. The door to the kingdom is reconciliation. But God is not merely love; He is holy love. Love is not weak, careless good-nature; there is in it a principle of self-preservation and self-assertion, a

righteousness which guards it from all that would lower its dignity and sacredness. God cannot, with due regard to His own holiness, pardon the sinner out of hand; atonement must be made for his sin. And yet the sinner cannot make atonement for himself. He is not only guilty but helpless. He cannot take the first step toward righting the wrong he has done to God. He has nothing to offer to God as an atonement.

“Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfil thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone.”

Therefore God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, sent him in His love and holiness. Jesus Christ was perfectly qualified for the work of atonement. He was the God-man. It was to be a divine atonement. God was to render the atonement to Himself for man; it was to be a divine provision, a gift of divine grace, something wholly gratuitous, in which men had no share at all. Nevertheless, it was to be a human atonement, rendered by humanity to God; in other words, it was to be a real atonement and not the mere show of one. God became man that He might make atonement for man; He became the central and universal Man. Because men were all sinners, and so unfit to render atonement, He made a new manhood, in and through which He might become reconciled to mankind, and which should be the beginning and rallying-point of a redeemed manhood.

Christ prepared himself for the atoning work by his human experience. From the first his relation to the race was vicarious. As we have seen, an atoning element runs alongside of the Saviour's work of revelation. He entered personally into our human life, taking upon him its joys and its sorrows, its prosperity and its adversity. He en-

dured temptation, trial, and hardship. He took upon his sympathy and love the woes of his human brethren. With that power of putting one's self into another's place which love alone gives, he made human sufferings his own, and, though sinless, learned the deepest meaning of sin. No man ever knew sin as Jesus Christ knew it. The sinner's eyes are always blurred when he looks at his own sin or that of his neighbor. But Christ understood it in all its evil, and understood its relation to God's holiness. As God he knew the divine displeasure which continually rests upon sin; he knew it standing thus over it and looking down upon it. As man, and that a holy man sharing the experience of his sinful brethren, he felt the divine displeasure coming down to him from above, and looked up to it with a sense of its righteousness and awfulness. In his union with sinners it was *as if* God's displeasure rested upon him also. Nay more, in so far as he shared in those corporate evils which are a divine punishment of sin, a kind of objectivized divine displeasure, he felt himself under punishment.

Thus Christ was fitted to be our substitute in atonement, and to render that atonement which we ought to render, but cannot. We have noticed that there was an atoning element in the Saviour's whole life. But the atoning act by way of eminence was his death upon the cross. His death, his blood, his cross, his giving of his life—such are the terms by which the Scriptures describe the atoning deed.

What gave Christ's death its efficacy as an atonement? The attempt to answer this question will carry us out of the sphere of distinctly revealed truth into that of human speculation, and we shall do well to carefully distinguish between the two and to recognize the necessary limitations of the latter. There is truth in Bishop Butler's words: "If the Scripture has, as surely it has, left this matter of the satisfaction of Christ mysterious, left somewhat in it unrevealed, all conjectures about it must be, if not evident-

ly absurd, yet at least uncertain. Nor has any one reason to complain for want of further information, unless he can show his claim to it" ("Analogy," Pt. II., ch. v.). Nevertheless, Butler's caution may go too far. "Uncertain" all conjectures must undoubtedly be, but not necessarily "palpably absurd." It is our right, if we choose, to take a purely agnostic position with reference to the inner and essential principle of the atonement, and to say with Coleridge, "The mysterious act, the operative cause, is transcendent. *Factum est* : and beyond the information contained in the enunciation of the fact, it can be characterized only by the consequences" ("Aids to Reflection," Am. ed., 1840, p. 287). But it is equally our right, while admitting the transcendent element in the problem, to reverently attempt such a solution of it as our reason, guided and enlightened by God's Spirit, will permit us to attain. In the exercise of this right, yet with the distinct recognition of the fact that "we know in part and prophesy in part," I would give a twofold answer to the question, What gave the Saviour's death its value as an atonement? It is the answer which, as I believe, results from a thorough criticism of the various theories which have been held during the history of the church.

The first branch of the answer concerns the relation of death to human sin. Death entered the world as the punishment of Adam's transgression. It has been the punishment visited upon all sinners since his time; it passed unto all men because all sinned (Rom. v. 12). Through the relation in which they stand to a fallen race, even infants, who have never sinned personally, die. Death may be called in a true sense, in virtue of the solidarity of the race, the common doom which rests upon mankind. It is the outward and visible manifestation of the divine displeasure. It is directly connected with that false relation to God which we call spiritual death, and it is the entrance for the unforgiven sinner into that final

state in which spiritual death works out its consequences and is visited by the divine punishment, and to which we give the name eternal death. The Saviour as a sinless man needed not to die, yet of his own free will he gave himself up to death, as the representative and substitute of the sinful race. He put himself, as far as was possible for the sinless One, into the sinner's place, where he could realize the greatness of human sin and of the divine displeasure which visits sin with punishment. He tasted death for every man (Heb. ii. 9).

The second branch of the answer relates to the inner meaning of the Saviour's death. Death has no atoning value in itself. The dignity and infinite worth of the Saviour's divine nature did not of themselves make his death a sufficient atonement. As atonement in the case of men, when they make it to each other, is always in its essence moral and spiritual, in whatever outward and significant act it may express itself, so in the case of the Saviour. It was the spirit and purpose with which he suffered that gave his death its efficacy. As the Son of Man, the Second Adam, he rendered to God that spiritual reparation or atonement which sinful men ought to render but cannot. We may not be able to understand altogether in what this reparation consisted, but we are not without glimpses of it. The Saviour laid his will a holy offering on the divine altar. Acting in behalf of mankind, with perfect obedience and love, and absolute self-surrender, he acknowledged the divine justice in the punishment of sin and sought the divine forgiveness. It was not a vicarious repentance, but a vicarious atonement.

- Repentance is personal and cannot be performed by another ; like faith, with which it is inseparably connected, it must be a man's own act. Atonement belongs not only to the individual life, but to the region of mankind's corporate unity, where representation and substitution are possible.

Combining the two branches of our answer, we may say that Christ's atonement consists in this: That as the Substitute for the sinful race, the God-man endured in obedience, love, and acknowledgment of the divine justice, the death which is the common doom, and by so doing rendered to God the spiritual reparation which was due from man, and without which God could not justly forgive the sinner.

In so far as death is the common punishment of sin we may say that Christ bore our punishment. But we use the language thus in a very different sense from that in which it is employed by the advocates of the theory of penal substitution. Christ did not bear our personal and individual punishment, either the temporal or the eternal punishment. He was not punished himself. He took upon him that consequence of sin which to others is punishment. He shared the common punishment voluntarily and for the purpose of effecting atonement for us, as the child who dies in infancy shares that punishment involuntarily. He was no more punished personally than is the child. We speak of his vicarious death, but the vicariousness lay rather in the spiritual sacrifice to God, of which the death was the vehicle and expression, than in the death itself. He was not our Substitute in punishment, but our Substitute in atonement.

III. It remains for me to speak of the reasonableness of the doctrine of the atonement. Among all the truths of the Christian system there is none which is more persistently assailed than this. The cross of Christ is as truly to-day, as in the times of the Apostles, "unto Jews a stumbling-block and unto Gentiles foolishness." The religion that seeks salvation in good works and the philosophy that denies revelation unite in opposition to the doctrine of the atonement. So strong and clamorous is the opposition that many minds are disturbed and confused by it, so that to-day there is inside the church, as well as

outside of it, a great deal of difficulty about the acceptance of this truth.

Now there are real reasons for the state of things which we find. In the first place there is a transcendent element, as we have already noticed, in the doctrine. Like the doctrines of the Trinity and the person of Christ, it belongs in part to the sphere of the infinite. In part, at least, the atonement is a transaction within the Deity itself. It is only the outward manifestation of it which we have been permitted to see. The death on Calvary is a revelation of eternal things. No wonder that those who judge merely by the standard of finite things should have difficulty with this mysterious dogma. A second reason lies in the distinctively Christian character of the doctrine. It belongs to the deepest core and essence of the redemptive system. Now this system was given because of human sin, and it comes into direct collision with the teachings of reason, so far as reason has been darkened by sin. There is something repulsive to the natural man in God's grace, and most of all in this wonderful provision upon which God's grace is based. A spiritual susceptibility must be present before there can be a full and hearty acceptance of the doctrine of the atonement. The awakened sinner, in despair of his own power, feeling his guilt and utter helplessness, finds in it just the help he needs. The Christian, who knows that he has been justified by faith on the ground of the Saviour's atoning sacrifice, would almost as soon think of doubting his own existence as the reality of this foundation upon which all his possessions and all his hopes are based. But the case stands very differently with him who has had no such experience. In the defence of the doctrine we must make our appeal in part to the "Christian consciousness." A third reason for the hesitation which so many have in the acceptance of the doctrine lies in its fundamental character. When we attempt to explain it by human analogies, or, as Horace

Bushnell puts it in the title of his "Vicarious Sacrifice,"* from "principles of universal obligation," we find that the analogies and principles derived from the relations of men must themselves be explained by the atonement. For example, we attempt to explain the atonement by showing what is needful in order to forgiveness, where a human father and son, or two human friends, have quarrelled. We fail, and the reason—which we may perceive and may not—lies in the fact that the human relation is the result of the atonement. It is true that I am to forgive my neighbor, so far as my power is concerned, without an adequate atonement. But why? Because Christ has rendered once for all a universal atonement. We are to forgive because we have been forgiven. The insufficient atonement which my neighbor makes to me becomes sufficient, and more than sufficient, when I understand what Christ has done for me and for every man.

Nevertheless, in spite of these especial difficulties in the way of understanding the doctrine of the atonement, it is a reasonable doctrine, like all the truths of the Christian system. The highest proof must indeed come through the personal experience of the soul that has been "crucified with Christ;" but a sufficient answer can be given both to the cavils of the opponent of Christianity and to the honest questionings of the Christian inquirer. Let me take up some of the more common objections and answer them.

1. The necessity of the atonement is denied. It is said that God is love, that He is always ready to forgive, and that we dishonor Him when we represent Him as demanding reparation. This objection is urged with more force against the theory of penal substitution than against that which has been given here, but still it is aimed at any theory which finds a Godward aspect in the atonement.

In reply, while admitting that God is love, we claim that His love is a holy love, which will not unrighteously forgive

* First edition.

the sinner without adequate amends. God must be true to Himself and true to His moral universe. He cannot deny Himself. God is not less holy than men, but far more so.

It is said that the human father who would not forgive his child when he came to him in penitence would be a monster, and that God must do the same by His human children. But the two cases are not parallel, for, as has been already said, the reason why man must forgive is because God has already forgiven him, and man can do without an atonement because Christ has rendered a perfect one. Moreover, the sinner does not come to God in penitence until God has furnished him with an atonement, nor is there any reason to believe that he ever would come without the aid of the divine grace. But though insisting that the two cases are not parallel, I claim that, so far as an analogy does exist between them, it favors the doctrine of atonement. The earthly father cannot forgive his child until he has rendered some atonement, even though it may be inadequate. There must be some acknowledgment of the father's just displeasure, some confession of wrong, and these things are of the nature of an atonement. Without them the father's forgiveness would be inoperative. Reconciliation implies action on both sides. The father could not, in the true and complete meaning of the word forgiveness, forgive an obstinately rebellious son. I claim also that the common consciousness of mankind, as expressed in religious beliefs and customs, testifies to the sinner's need of atonement. Doubtless there has been much of evil associated with the sacrifices of the heathen, but there is in them a witness to the great truth which the *anima naturaliter Christiana*, the soul by nature Christian, recognizes instinctively, that without atonement there can be no forgiveness. Even the awful custom of human sacrifice gives grim testimony to this profound moral and religious principle.

2. It is denied that atonement can be vicarious. Every

man, it is said, stands or falls according to his own personal relations to God. Another cannot step in and take his place.

But we assert that there is such a relation between man and man in the race that vicarious action is possible. The individualistic or atomistic view of men is not sustained by true science any more than by true theology. The solidarity of the race is such that one can and must act for another. Parents act and choose for their children. The stronger members of society take upon themselves the interests of the weaker. For good and for evil men are bound up together. There is a common life as well as an individual life. Without the vicarious relation the great institutions of mankind, such as the family, the church, the state, the school, business, commerce, would be impossible. When, then, we consider how deeply rooted this vicarious principle is in the race, how it makes itself felt in every department of human life and activity, especially how important a part it plays in the moral relations of men, is it strange that God should have availed Himself of it to secure the redemption of mankind? May we not even suppose that He constituted the race thus, in order that thus He might redeem it? If ordinary men can stand for each other, exercising vicarious powers in each other's behalf, how much more can the Son of Man, the Head of the race, who stands in a central relation to mankind and a personal relation to every soul of man, assume this vicarious relation and make vicarious atonement! If Adam was our natural head, why should not Christ be our spiritual Head?

3. The atoning act is called in question. It is said that it is not an atonement. The amends which Christ makes is not commensurate with the sin of man. What is there in the death of Christ that should lead God to forgive sin? We cannot suppose that God took any pleasure in the death of this innocent Being or received

any benefit from it. The full force of this objection is directed against the theory of penal substitution, and emphasizes the fact that while men are condemned to eternal punishment Christ suffers only physical death.

It is not needful for me to defend the doctrine of substitution in punishment, which undoubtedly has its defects. It will be sufficient to answer the objection so far as it touches the more general point of atonement. But if the view which has been advanced be true, that the atonement consisted not merely in the outward fact of Christ's death, but chiefly in the spirit and purpose with which he endured death, then the objection loses its point. For all real atonement is a matter of the will. It would be so in the case of the sinner, if he were able to atone for his own sin. That which the Saviour gives is that which the sinner ought to give but cannot. The two are altogether commensurate. Moreover, that which God receives is that which is most precious; it is the holy will of the holy Son of Man, appearing for the race and presenting the spiritual atonement of the race to Him. The death is the vesture, so to speak, of the atonement, essential, since all the natural consequences and physical punishments of sin are concentrated in death, but valuable only as it covers and contains the spiritual reparation.

4. It is said that the atonement is immoral, since it secures forgiveness for those who are unworthy of forgiveness, and lowers the standard of human obligation. We are to work out our own salvation and not to depend upon the merits of another. The doctrine therefore militates against the divine righteousness and tends to degrade the divine law. It is scarcely needful to say that this objection is not urged by those who claim that God is always ready to forgive without an atonement. It has its weight with many minds which would not be affected by the arguments of the latter class. It seems to me that it is worthier of respect than most of the objections brought

against our doctrine. Nevertheless, it rests upon a misapprehension. Atonement is only a part of a great redemptive system, the object of which is the complete salvation of the sinner and the perfect establishment of the kingdom of God. It is a means to an end and derives its whole importance from this fact. Men are forgiven that they may be fully saved and only when all the arrangements have been made by which this full salvation is possible. The divine forgiveness is merely the door of entrance to the kingdom, and once in the kingdom the moral obligation rests on a man with even stronger pressure than before. We must not look at the priestly office of Christ, whereby he secures forgiveness, apart from the kingly, whereby he sanctifies and saves through the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us also remember that the atonement of Christ secures pardon only for those who exercise personal faith, and that this faith, if it be genuine, contains in it the germ of love and holy living. The sinner is not forgiven and left where he is; rather he is forgiven, and by God's grace, appropriated by faith, made holy. I freely concede that if this were not the case the atonement would be hard to reconcile either with the divine righteousness or the requirements of the divine law. But how are God's righteousness and law most honored, by leaving the sinner in his helplessness and ruin? or by furnishing him with such an atonement as will open the way for his complete salvation?

5. An objection, which to some minds is a very serious one, is derived from the alleged opposition in which the doctrine of the atonement places God the Father and God the Son. The two, it is said, are represented as antagonistic to each other—the Father as requiring atonement, the Son as giving it—whereas the Scriptures always exhibit the Father in the same attitude of love toward mankind as the Son.

This objection bears rather upon our imperfect concep-

tion of the facts than upon the facts themselves. It is hard to keep all the elements of the truth in due relation to each other in our thoughts and language upon this profound subject. We are apt to use trinitarian language while speaking of the love of God, and tritheistic language when discussing the atonement. But, in fact, Father, Son, and Spirit are all active alike in the love which originates the atonement and the acts by which it is carried out. God through the medium of the God-man makes atonement to Himself for men. The Father and the Son were never in closer accord than when Jesus Christ died upon the cross. I do not deny that the receiving of the atonement belonged in an especial sense to the Father and the rendering of it to the Son. Nor do I deny that there is in our conception of the truth a certain straining of the trinitarian relations involved in the death of Christ—a straining incident to the incarnation during the lowest stage in the state of humiliation—a straining which made it possible for Christ to utter then, with a meaning which would not attach to them at any other time, the words, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” But we have in the teachings of revelation the key to the mystery, and may, if we can penetrate far enough into the inmost meaning of the Gospel, see how, even in the apparent separation, there was the closest fellowship. Christ himself has taught us that he who will save his life must lose it, that greatness consists in humiliation. There is in all love a straining of the inner life, a giving ourselves away that we may find ourselves again. This is the explanation of the apparent separation of the Father and the Son. It is God giving His Son, God sparing not His Son. It is a depth of love and divine greatness that can be understood only through a paradox—only as we take together two cries of Christ, “My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” and “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”

XXII.

THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF CHRIST

(3. *The Administration of Redemption*)

THE topics which I wish to discuss in the present chapter are—

- I. The Kingly Office of Christ;
- II. His Work through the Holy Spirit; and
- III. The Scope of his Redemptive Work.

I. The consideration of the third factor in Christ's work of redemption, namely, his kingly office, brings us upon ground already traversed in part in our examination of the doctrines of the kingdom of God and the person of Christ. The importance of the subject will justify the repetition which its treatment will involve. It is to be noted, however, that while the subject-matter is to some extent the same, the point of view is altogether different. We shall be engaged in our present inquiries not with the nature of the redemptive kingdom nor with the dignity of the messianic King, but with the kingly element in the Saviour's work regarded as a divine provision for the accomplishment of redemption.

Of the three factors of the saving work—the revelation, the atonement, and the kingly office—the last is in some respects the most important. It is the practical element, directly connected with the execution of redemption. Revelation is indeed the absolutely essential prerequisite. Inasmuch as the work is to be carried out through human agencies, men must know God as He is. The Word must become flesh and the divine grace and truth be manifested

through him. We cannot conceive of redemption apart from the actual presence on earth of God in Christ. So also the atonement is absolutely essential, a *conditio sine qua non*. It is, as we have seen, central in the redemptive work, concentrating all that is most sacred and precious in it. It is the throbbing, life-giving heart of redemption. But both the revelation and the atonement would remain ineffectual without the kingly office. It is not enough that the way should be prepared for salvation; there must be an actual salvation. Revelation and atonement are not self-operative. It would not have been sufficient to provide these elements of redemption and leave the world to appropriate them as it could. Men are to be saved by the truth; but the naked truth, even though it was the truth of the Gospel, never did and never could save any one. Men are to be saved by atoning grace; but the atonement alone never saved any one, even when accompanied by the truth of the Gospel. There must be a direct exercise of *power*, an actual laying hold of sinners and applying the truth, and the atoning grace to them—power by which they may be called, justified, sanctified, saved.

It is this actual application of the divine grace to the salvation of the sinful world that is provided for by the kingly office of Christ. The Saviour did not to any considerable degree enter upon the practical work of salvation during his earthly ministry. He did not intend to do so. His work was chiefly preparatory. He contented himself with gathering about him a little band of disciples and educating them to be his instruments in the great redemptive work which was to begin after his ascension. He was, indeed, a King while still in this world; he showed it in his miracles and in all his messianic activity. But he was rather a king by right than by actual exercise of authority. It was when he ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God, that the

truly kingly work, the work of establishing his kingdom in the world, began. We saw, when we were investigating the doctrine of Christ's person, that the real coronation of the Messiah took place at his ascension. Not till then was he ready for his great task of subduing the world to himself. Then he began to exercise the authority which had been given him in heaven and on earth (Matt. xxviii. 18). Then the term Lord, which his disciples had begun to apply to him while he was on earth, received its full messianic meaning.

The kingly office of Christ implies his constant presence and activity in the world. The promise which he gave his disciples was that he would be with them always, even unto the end of the world (Matt. xxviii. 20). From the day of Pentecost onward he manifested his power through the Holy Spirit. He is the invisible but potent source of all the work of the kingdom. Christians do their work as his instruments. Every soul that is rescued from sin is rescued by him. Each forward movement of the kingdom is due to his efficiency.

We may distinguish a general and a particular element in the Saviour's kingly work, the former subsidiary to the latter.

In the first place, Christ rules over the whole universe. In order that he may accomplish the work of redemption, God has put into the hands of the God-man the administration of His providence. The Redeemer is now the providential Governor. In his person our humanity sits upon the throne and shares in the government of the world. The material, intellectual, and moral forces of the universe are subject to him and he uses them to advance the kingdom of God. Under his guidance the natural world is playing its part in the work of redemption. The stars in their courses fight against the enemies of the Saviour's redemptive kingdom, and the creation, groaning and travailing in pain together in its bondage of corrup-

tion, is made to do its part not only for the salvation of men, but also for its own deliverance into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. viii. 21, 22). All things in the material sphere work together for good to them that love God (Rom. viii. 28), because the Saviour is on the throne. He rules also in human life and history. The true King of men is the glorified Saviour. Earthly monarchs and governments possess authority only as they derive it from him. They are usurpers when they set themselves up in their own strength and think to rule in opposition to him. Christian history is fulfilling with wonderful truth the second Psalm, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." The warning still holds good, "Now therefore be wise, O ye kings; be instructed ye judges of the earth. . . . Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, for his wrath will soon be kindled." Popular thought, even among Christians, makes a sharp line of separation between religious and secular things, and confines Christ's activity to the former. But no view could be more unscriptural and irrational. The Saviour is, as John calls him, the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. xix. 16), not in a metaphorical but a literal sense. He is the real power in all politics, in all social movements, in all moral reforms, in all intellectual progress. He is using all the institutions of mankind to advance his work—the family, the state, the school, the church, commerce, and the rest. He was working in and through the merchants and diplomatists who opened the door for our missionaries to enter China. Livingstone and Stanley and Baker were doing his bidding when they explored Africa and prepared the way for the incoming of the Gospel. So in the narrower sphere of individual life

Christ is at work, turning, guiding, shaping events, sending now prosperity and now adversity, now joy and now bereavement, changing the current of life and destiny, holding in his hands the issues of life and death—all with reference to the great end. This larger providential rule of Christ is, as has been said, all subordinated to his work of salvation. It is the method by which he does the preparatory, and what we might call the rough work of salvation. The world itself was shaped with reference to this use, and it is a most effective instrument in the Saviour's hands. If we only had the faith to apprehend the things unseen and eternal in the things seen and temporal, we should discover in every running brook and every breaking dawn, in every event of history and every experience of life, the presence of the Saviour working for human redemption.

In a second and more especial sense Christ's kingly office is exercised in and over his church. This is pre-eminently the realm of grace. Paul says, God "gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 22, 23). I am referring now not so much to the church as an outward institution as to what is called the "invisible church," which is composed of all true believers. It is here that the kingdom of God has actually come, for here the sway of the Father and the Saviour is gladly and willingly acknowledged. Each soul in this invisible church has been called by Christ's Spirit, forgiven on the ground of his atonement, regenerated by his grace, and is being saved by his power through obedience and sanctification. These members of Christ's body, his faithful disciples and followers, are engaged in his service; it is their life-work to carry out his work of redemption. It is through them that he works directly in bringing other souls to his kingdom. Whereas in the broader sphere of his providential working his instruments are to a large extent unwilling

agents, here all are by their own free choice devoted to his service. All the highest work of the kingdom is done by them. It is not too much to say that since the days of miracles and direct revelations ceased, no soul has been converted to the Saviour except through the instrumentality of Christian men or women. To them is committed the ministry of reconciliation; they build up the church as an outward and visible institution; they advance the kingdom in foreign lands and lead the heathen to the Saviour of the world. Nay, even Christ seems to have made the progress of the kingdom in large measure dependent upon their exertions, so that their zeal may accelerate it and their sluggishness—for we are speaking of imperfect Christians—may retard it. We distinguish these struggling and imperfect believers of the “church militant” from the “church triumphant,” the believers who have fought the good fight and have been saved and perfected. These two churches are in reality but one, a single “communion of the saints,” and we cannot doubt that the company of the blessed on high are engaged, though in ways unknown to us, in the same blessed work with their militant brethren below.

The broader and narrower conceptions of Christ's kingly office are connected with the question respecting the duration of his rule. Ordinarily in the Bible the reign of the Messiah is represented as everlasting. “He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke i. 33). At the same time there is one passage which distinctly teaches a termination of his reign. Paul speaks of “the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. . . . And when all things have been subjected unto him; then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that

God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 24-28). The two apparently contradictory utterances can be reconciled, if we understand that while Christ's rule in the perfected kingdom of God over his people is to be eternal, the broader rule over the universe for the purposes of redemption is to cease as no longer necessary; all evil will then have ceased and the work of redemption be complete. The God-man—for it is of him that we are speaking, and not of the Son in his exclusively divine character—will give back this providential government to God, and He will be once more all in all. But the Saviour, divine and human, will remain eternally the King of his people, the Head of the messianic kingdom.

II. Such is the provision made in the kingly office of Christ for the completion of salvation. But the subject would be but imperfectly treated if I should omit to speak in this connection of the Holy Spirit. It is through the Spirit that Christ executes his kingly office. His work of grace is the work of the Spirit.

The thoughtful reader of the Bible is struck with the fact that the functions of the Spirit under the two dispensations of God's redemptive grace are entirely different. With the day of Pentecost begins an entirely new activity of the Third Person of the Trinity. Wherein consists the difference, and what is the office of the Spirit under the New Dispensation? The answer is not far to seek. Since the ministry and ascension of Christ it has been the work of the Spirit to carry out his work, to be his agent in the execution of his redemptive task. The God-man is in heaven, separated—at least so far as his human nature is concerned—from the world. There he is to abide until the time of the second coming, when he will return to bring the work of redemption to its glorious conclusion. Meantime he exercises his power and manifests his presence on earth through the Spirit. When he was about to leave his disciples, he declared that he would not

leave them orphans, but that he would come unto them. He promised to send them the Paraclete, or Helper, who should be his representative. "He shall glorify me," he said, "for he shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you" (John xvi. 14). The great practical work of redemption was to be done through him: "He, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged" (John xvi. 8-11). He was to be the Inspirer through whom the apostles should be capacitated for their work, in word and miracle. The Saviour after his resurrection ascended into heaven, leaving his disciples the assurance, "Behold I send forth the promise of my Father upon you," and the command, "Tarry ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49). The promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. The coming of the Spirit in power was the sure evidence that Jesus was indeed the Christ. "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted," said Peter, "and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear" (Acts ii. 33). It was the beginning of the actual salvation, and on the ground of this manifestation of the redemptive power of the risen Christ, the Apostle preached the Gospel of the divine grace and made the free offer of its benefits: "Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38).

Such in general is the work of the Holy Spirit in redemption. Let us now look at some of the details.

It is through the Spirit that Christ performs that larger providential work in the interests of redemption of which mention has been made. The Spirit from the beginning

has been God's agent in His providential operations. Wherever the Creator comes into contact with the creature, it is through the Spirit. But now the Spirit performs this office in the execution of Christ's redemptive providence. Through him the Saviour rules in nature, acts upon the human soul, speaks in every conscience, guides the course of history.

The Spirit draws men to Christ. It is through his agency that the risen Saviour enters every soul and becomes not merely as the Logos but as the God-man, "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John i. 9). He pleads with men to bring them to Christ. He gives efficacy to the preaching of the Gospel. The sin against the Holy Ghost is an unpardonable sin, because when he is finally rejected Christ has no other means by which he can reach the soul; the resources of his grace are exhausted.

It is through the Spirit that Christ regenerates men. Faith on the human side opens the closed temple of the human heart to its rightful owner. By the Spirit the Father and Christ enter and take possession. So another and higher life begins. Old things have passed away and all things become new. The evil choice of self and the world is supplanted by the holy choice of God and His kingdom. The Spirit bears inward witness of God's forgiving grace, of peace with God and Sonship. The Spirit is the medium of the new life of communion and fellowship between Christ and the believer, which is the beginning of eternal life. The disciple of Christ is united with his Master as a branch of the true vine (John xv. 1-8). Christ dwells in his heart by faith (Eph. iii. 16, 17).

Christ performs his work of sanctification by the Spirit, (Gal. v. 22), and by him capacitates his disciples for the special duties of their Christian calling (1 Cor. xii. 4-13). His presence is the pledge of that redemption of the human body which Christ is to accomplish at the

resurrection (2 Cor. v. 5). Through his power the child of God will be saved and glorified.

Especially Christ's kingly work in the church is through the agency of the Spirit. It is Christ's presence among his disciples through the Spirit that makes the church. Through him the members of Christ's body are bound to him and to each other. The ordinances of the church, the word, the sacraments, and prayer are made real "means of grace" by his agency.

III. Our examination of the factors of Christ's redemptive work is now complete, but we have still to ask concerning its scope, Was redemption intended for all mankind or for only a part? And if it was intended for all, how is it brought to bear upon those who have not had the Gospel preached to them?

The first of these questions is usually stated more narrowly, being made to refer to the extent of the atonement. But there is no reason why we should not ask it with reference to the whole redemptive work of Christ. In making the provision for redemption through the prophetic, priestly, and kingly work of Christ, did God mean it for all men, in the sense that it should be freely offered to all, and that all should have a full and fair opportunity to accept it?

There has been from the earliest days of Protestants a school of theologians who have answered this question in the negative. They do not deny that Christ's work is sufficient for all, but they affirm that it was intended only for the elect, and that it is placed within the reach of the elect alone. Out of the mass of fallen men God from all eternity chose a certain number that He might bestow eternal life upon them. The Saviour's redemptive work was intended for them, and them alone. They appeal to those passages in which Christ is said to have laid down his life for his sheep (John x. 11), to have died for his friends (John xv. 13-16), to have made intercession for

his disciples (John xvii. 6-19); and to those in which his death is declared to have been for the elect or for the church (Rom. viii. 32, 33; Eph. v. 25-27).

All will admit that some are actually saved, and that others are not, and that God who knows the end from the beginning has included both classes in His all-comprehending eternal purpose. But it does not follow from this that God meant to restrict the provision for redemption to one class. The question is, what has revelation to tell us on the subject? Granting that there are a few passages in the Bible which relate to the bearing of the redemptive work upon those who are actually saved, are there none that give redemption a wider scope? If there are, common-sense teaches us to interpret the passages of more restricted import by those of wider bearing, unless the former are so worded as to distinctly exclude the latter. Now there can be no question—except to those who have a theory to maintain—that the Bible teaches clearly and unequivocally the universality of the provision for salvation. The offer of the Gospel is made to all men, in language that is a ghastly mockery, if it is intended only for a part. The call is, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!” (Isai. lv. 1). “Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. xi. 28). “Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely” (Rev. xxii. 17). All men are commanded to repent (Mark i. 15, Acts xvii. 30). In that wonderful passage in which Paul compares the effects of Adam’s sin with those of Christ’s redemptive work, the latter are made coextensive with the former: “So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men unto justification” (Rom. v. 18). This passage can be limited to the elect only by conceding the contention of the Universalists that all men are elect. Its true

meaning is that the provision for redemption extends to all men, and that all men have the opportunity to appropriate it. There are, besides, a number of passages in which Christ's work is distinctly said to have been for all men. "Behold the Lamb of God," said John, "that taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29), not the elect, but the world. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son" (John iii. 16). "The bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (John vi. 51). We are told that Jesus, because of the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honor, "that by the grace of God he should taste death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9). John declares, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John ii. 2). Paul employs language equally strong. He speaks of "God our Saviour, who willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 4-6); and of "the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10); and of "the grace of God" which "hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (Tit. ii. 11). In the presence of such strong and explicit scriptural assertions it seems needless to argue the case at all. The teaching of revelation is that the redemptive work of Christ was intended for all men without exception, and is placed within the reach of all men, so that if any fail to secure its benefits, the fault lies with themselves.

It is not so easy to answer the second question which we proposed to ourselves, namely, how the redemptive work of Christ is made available for those who have not had the Gospel preached to them and so are ignorant of the divine grace. Upon this point the Scripture does not give us the information which we desire. Nevertheless, fol-

lowing the general lines of scriptural teaching, we need not be wholly at a loss for an explanation. There are two facts which together suggest such possibilities as to make it evident that there is no hinderance in the divine ordering of the universe to the bringing to bear of Christ's redemptive grace upon every soul. The first of these facts is the relation of grace into which all mankind has been brought by Christ's work. God's attitude toward men is one of reconciliation—not, of course, a complete reconciliation, so long as men fail to appropriate the divine grace, but complete so far as God's sole action can make it. As the result of the Saviour's work mankind has been placed upon a Christian basis. There is reason to believe that in this way every soul, whether knowing what Christ has done or not, receives the benefit of his work. The Holy Spirit works upon every heart, and that Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and comes with the grace of his redemption. It is a great advantage to hear the Gospel and learn the story of the cross, but the grace of the cross does not come to the soul through the ear alone. God is not so grudging of the grace which He has furnished in His Son as to give it only to those who can appropriate the gift with full knowledge of its meaning. No, that grace is like the blessed light of heaven that pours into every soul, coming through eye and feeling, coming where there is knowledge of its nature and where there is not. Now as every person who has reached the age of moral responsibility has some knowledge of God and duty, and may open or close the sanctuary of his will to such divine grace as he knows, even those who have not heard of Christ may receive the grace of Christ, may yield to the drawing of the Father to the Son and be united to Christ through the Holy Spirit. The other fact of which I spoke as throwing light upon the subject before us is the opportunity of progress in the other life. Salvation will not be complete until all the effects of sin are removed.

All that is needful, in order that a soul may be saved, is that such a beginning should be made through reconciliation with God as will give His grace an opportunity to operate. The other world is to be God's school, and those who have not heard of Christ here, yet have yielded to His grace working in their hearts, will have full opportunity to gain the higher knowledge and training which they need from Christ himself.

Let us look at the special problems which come up in connection with the general one upon which we are engaged.

1. In what relation did the saints of the Old Dispensation stand to Christ's redemptive work? The Bible tells us but little upon the subject, but its few utterances and its general implications are sufficient to show that the faithful who lived before the Saviour's light dawned upon the world and died in faith, not having received the promises (Heb. xi. 13), were saved on the ground and through the provisions of Christ's redemptive work. The Epistle to the Hebrews, which deals more fully with this subject than any other book of the Bible, declares that Christ's death took place "for the redemption of the sins that were under the first covenant," and that it was efficacious for all the preceding ages of the world (Heb. ix. 15, 26), and after enumerating the heroes of faith, represents them as joined with us in the same salvation. The great type of Christian faith is the faith of Abraham, who believed in God and it was counted to him for righteousness (Gen. xv. 6; Rom. iv.; Gal. iii. 6 seq.). These Old Testament believers had some prevision of the Messiah through the types of the law and the predictions of the prophets, but it was very vague. But they laid hold by faith upon the God of redemption, trusting in Him and His grace, and the grace of Christ, not yet outwardly made known to the world, but already potent and active, was bestowed upon them. Their faith was, so to speak, an *implicit* faith

which grasped far more than they knew or could understand. Doubtless they had to be educated and brought up to the level of the New Dispensation after they reached the other world. Possibly there is truth in the venerable belief of the Roman Catholic church that the Saviour at his death released them from Hades and took them with him into heaven, though that view has its difficulties and improbabilities. At all events they received their full knowledge of the Saviour and his salvation only in the other world. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day," said Jesus, "and he saw it and was glad" (John viii. 56).

2. The question as to the bearing of Christ's work upon those who die in infancy is of more importance to us. A third of the race belong to this class. Are they saved, and if so, how are they saved? The Roman Catholic church, which holds that the redemptive grace of Christ is bestowed upon men only through the priesthood and the sacraments, teaches that infants dying without baptism are lost, although this harsh doctrine is mitigated by the belief that the punishment of such unfortunates is wholly privative and unaccompanied by actual suffering. The earlier Protestants also consented to the doctrine of infant damnation, the Lutherans, like the Roman Catholics, consigning unbaptized infants to perdition, and the Calvinists taking the same ground with respect to non-elect infants. But a fairer exegesis of the Scriptures, and a fuller understanding of the great fundamental principles of Christianity, have brought the Protestant churches almost, if not quite, unanimously to the recognition of the universality of Christ's grace in its reference to this class. If Christ himself said, "Forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xix. 14), his followers have no right to exclude any from a share in his redemption. The only power that can tear a soul away from Christ is that soul's own free will; if it dies before it has reached the period of choice, we may be sure that Christ

will keep his hold upon it. As Dr. Charles Hodge said, "All the descendants of Adam, except those of whom it is explicitly revealed that they cannot inherit the kingdom of God, are saved" ("Systematic Theology," vol. i., p. 26). But such children are saved not apart from the work of Christ, but through that work. Though they do not need to be forgiven for the sins they have never committed, yet they are members of a sinful race, themselves possessed of tendencies to sin, which would in due time manifest themselves, were they left to themselves, and they need for their perfecting and salvation the grace of that Saviour who died for all mankind. Death ushers them into the school of the blessed Master, and their moral development takes place under his fostering love in the holy environment of heaven.

3. A far more difficult question confronts us when we inquire respecting the relation of Christ's redemptive work to the heathen. The reticence of the Bible, of which mention has already been made, is nowhere more striking than here. We shall do well therefore to avoid all dogmatism respecting this dark subject and to exercise a generous Christian tolerance toward those who differ from us in their conclusions. Certainly, however, we cannot be mistaken in applying to this class the doctrine which we have found clearly taught in the Scripture, of the universality of Christ's redemptive work. The view which was almost universal in the past, and which still is so widely maintained, that all the heathen, to whom the Gospel has not come as an outward message, are lost, finds no sufficient warrant in the Word of God. There is something awful in the thought that so large a portion of the human race "have light enough to condemn them, but not light enough to save them." This rigorous doctrine is gradually giving way to a larger and more Christian belief, and even those who hold it do so rather because they fear by letting it go to weaken the missionary motive

than because it commends itself to their truer Christian thought.

But if we hold fast to this belief in a universal opportunity to accept God's grace, we need be less strenuous as to the method by which this result is to be accomplished. In any case it must be through the Saviour's redemptive grace and the power of his Holy Spirit.

The theory is widely held in Germany and England, and has attained considerable currency in this country during the last ten years, that God gives to the heathen after death an opportunity to decide for or against Jesus Christ. The advocates of this view hold that the knowledge of the Gospel and of Christ himself is needful in order that there should be a full and fair decision of the great question upon which human destiny depends. They claim that the Last Judgment is the time when God passes His final sentence, and that until that time the opportunity remains open for those to accept Christ who have had no opportunity in this life. Great stress is laid upon the absoluteness of Christianity and the need that the Gospel should be brought to every soul. For those who have not had a probation here, there must be one in the other world. Appeal is made in support of the view to those passages in which, according to a widely accepted interpretation, Christ is said to have preached the Gospel after his death (1 Pet. iii. 18-20; iv. 6); but the theory rests rather upon general theological principles than upon particular texts.

Another theory, which has found somewhat more general acceptance, maintains that this life is for the heathen, as for all men, the time of decision, and that those heathen who avail themselves of the light they have, are saved on the ground of Christ's atonement, by an implicit faith in its essential character, the same as that by which the patriarchs were saved. Those who hold this view lay stress upon the universality of the operations of Christ's

Spirit. They find confirmation of their theory in the declaration of the evangelist, that the Logos is "the true light, even the light which lighteth every man coming into the world" (John i. 9). Their belief is that every man has a sufficient probation in this life. The more candid and thoughtful advocates of this view admit that they cannot give chapter and verse of the Bible in support of it, the texts which are ordinarily given not being able to stand the test of a careful exegesis; but like the theologians who hold the other view, they believe that their conclusions are based upon the general principles of the Christian system.

I cannot agree with those who regard the theory of an extended probation for the heathen as a dangerous heresy, subversive of fundamental Christian truth. A belief that is not contradicted by any express utterances of the Word of God, and does not militate against any of the essential doctrines of Christianity, and which has for its object the vindication of the divine righteousness in its dealings with a majority of the human race, has, it seems to me, its right of existence, when it is held with due recognition of our necessary ignorance respecting this dark and difficult subject. The right of theological speculation respecting matters upon which the Scripture is silent ought to be jealously guarded, so long as it does not run into an over-confident dogmatism. There are many minds that are helped by this theory as they could not be by any other, and led by it to a profounder and more genuine trust in God.

The question, however, whether on the whole the theory of extended probation is the more satisfactory, and whether it accords more nearly with the commonly accepted principles of our evangelical theology, is a different one, and I am inclined to answer it in the negative. The other view has indeed its difficulties. But in theology we find few theories that are wholly free from difficulties, and generally

have to content ourselves with that which has the fewest. The view that God gives to the heathen a sufficient opportunity in this life to make the great decision seems to me the most satisfactory. The Bible everywhere lays its chief emphasis upon two periods—if we may so designate them in spite of the fact that one of them has no end—the present life and the eternal ages subsequent to the Last Judgment. The intermediate state is passed over with a remarkable reticence, and is never brought into connection with the great moral and spiritual processes by which God establishes His kingdom. This life is the time of decision. The Last Judgment is not so much the time for the determination of individual destiny, as for the vindication of the divine righteousness in the historical work of redemption—the great Theodicy—and for the assigning of men to their final state and the establishment of the eternal order of things. The distinction made by the old theologians between the particular judgment which takes place at death, and the judgment of the Last Day, seems to have the spirit, if not the letter, of the New Testament in its favor. There is no good reason for assuming that the intermediate state is a period for the decision of human destiny. If it is a state of probation, it must be a mixed state, the good and the evil still unseparated—a view which presents peculiar difficulties.

It is not needful, in order to the making of the great decision of life, that men should have a knowledge of Christ and his redemptive work. It is sufficient if they receive the benefits of the Saviour's salvation and have his Spirit working in their hearts. I am far from claiming that they could make the decision upon a merely natural basis, apart from the grace of Christ; all that I assert is that in order to a decision they need not have the knowledge of Christ. I am not impugning the principle of the absoluteness of Christianity, but rather vindicating for Christianity a universal operation in the present life, and not

merely in the other life. The heathen who feels the moving of God's Spirit in his soul, and recognizing it as divine, gives up his will to its influence, thereby decides for Christ, and I verily believe is accepted by Christ. It is not the knowledge of faith which makes it "saving;" it is its receptivity. God—so I reverently and confidently believe—saves every man who will let himself be saved. The smallest and feeblest faith, accompanied by a minimum of knowledge, is sufficient, if it is true faith, to give God's grace a foothold, and He will do the rest.

A distinction should be made between the decision which is possible in this life, and the education and perfecting which can, in the case of such heathen as those of whom I have spoken, take place only in the other world. For the latter the personal knowledge of Christ and his work is undoubtedly necessary. But the soul which has chosen the highest good it knew will gladly welcome the personal manifestation of the perfect Good, the Saviour Jesus Christ. Let such a soul, with a faith which makes it susceptible to divine influences, be transferred from its dark and sinful environment in this world to the school of Christ, where it will be surrounded with all holy influences, and the work of growth and sanctification will go on apace.

The question how many heathen are saved is one that we cannot answer. There is not much to encourage us in the outward life of heathendom. But we must remember that the heathen are not to be judged by the same standard as those who have been brought up under the light of the Gospel. God may see what we do not see, a spark of faith in the soul, which His grace can kindle under better conditions into a bright flame. The great Gospel principle of justification by faith, with its denial of all possible justification by works, should lead us to look away from the outward and hope that God may find a true faith within. These heathen are not to be saved by their works

any more than we, but wholly by God's grace. It may be that a true faith may exist in them in connection with defects and sins which would render faith in us impossible. The question with God is, whether a man is salvageable, and if he is, God finds a way to save him.

When our Saviour uttered his wonderful parables of the kingdom, the first and most striking had reference to the sowing of the Gospel seed. The different effect produced in different hearts was made to depend upon a different state of those hearts as regarded their susceptibility. The wayside, the rocky places, and the good ground indicated the difference in this respect (Matt. xiii. 1-23). The Master did not explain how the hearts came to be in the condition in which the Gospel found them, but the fair inference is that the difference lay in the free choices of the different souls. In other words, there is a pre-Christian faith—pre-Christian in the sense of preceding the knowledge of Christ—as well as a pre-Christian unbelief, which practically decide destiny and anticipate the outward decision which the preaching of the Gospel brings about. The Saviour seems to have had the same fact in mind when he said, “Everyone that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov’d. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be manifest, that they have been wrought in God” (John iii. 20, 21). He said to Pilate, “Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (John xix. 37). Such a pre-Christian faith, which may render even the most ignorant man a “doer of the truth,” it seems to me may be exercised by many heathen, who will in the other world come to the perfect light, and whose works will then be made manifest that they have been wrought in God. God only knows how many such heathen there are. While the Christian church is so backward in the work of missions to the heathen, we may well hope that they are very many.

But the question is asked, Does not this generous hope for the heathen weaken and even destroy the motive of Christian missions? I reply No; most emphatically not. The great motive of missions is the motive derived from the chief end of God's plan and of man's existence, the establishment of God's kingdom. The place where that kingdom is to be established is here, in this world. What God is seeking in His redemptive work is to bring this world to Christ, not merely to bring souls out of it into heaven. The motive of missions is the motive of the Gospel everywhere, to bring about the completion of redemption, to hasten the time when the kingdom of the world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Rev. xi. 15). So long as we delay this work, we trust that God in His equity will allow no soul to perish simply for our negligence. But this trust in nowise relieves us from our duty. It is ours to take the Gospel to our benighted brethren in heathen lands, to give them the same privileges which we possess, and the same glorious opportunities. It is ours to roll back the dark shadow which rests upon the earth. The Saviour's command has been given us, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to the whole creation" (Mark xvi. 15). The fact that God will deal equitably with all men and save those heathen who will permit themselves to be saved should not encourage us to be remiss, but rather stimulate us to greater effort.

If we cannot send the missionary to the heathen unless we are sure that they will all perish if he stays at home, let us leave the work. But let us hope that God will raise up a race of men who can preach Christ from a nobler motive, even from love to their Saviour and their fellow-men.

XXIII.

ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

Our last topic was the universality of God's grace in Jesus Christ. But the question arises, Is this all that the Bible teaches? Is there not alongside of its universalism a particularism which demands equally to be taken into account? A candid study of the Bible permits us to answer this question only in the affirmative. It becomes therefore a matter of importance, that, before entering upon the subject of the appropriation of redemption, we should examine this scriptural particularism and show, if we can, that it is consistent with the universal purpose of Christ's redemptive work and the bestowal upon all men of the opportunity to accept his grace.

I. We will look first at the teachings of the Bible upon the subject. The principle of election, as we saw when considering the redemptive revelation, occupies a prominent place in the Old Testament. It was "God's method of using the few to bless the many." An individual, a family, a nation, was chosen; invested with especial blessings and privileges; educated by various influences, providential and miraculous; made the recipient of divine revelation; and thus capacitated for particular functions in God's great work of establishing His kingdom in the world. Thus the divine call came to Abraham to get out of his country and from his kindred, and from his father's house, unto a land which God should show him, and the promise was given that he should become a great nation, and that all the families of the earth should be blessed in

him (Gen. xii. 1-3). In this election the foundation was laid for all God's future work of redemption. It was an election of grace, resting not upon the good works of the patriarch, but upon the divine good pleasure. The subjective condition of the election was Abraham's faith; he believed in God, and He counted it to him for righteousness (Gen. xv. 6). But this faith, which was the *conditio sine qua non*, the receptivity without which the election would have remained inoperative, was not the ground of the election, still less its cause; the efficiency lay in the divine grace; and the faith, although it involved an element of personal and individual freedom, was in a true sense the result of the divine education. The election of Abraham is the great representative or typical case in the Old Testament; all the other instances follow the same model. Isaac, the son of promise, was chosen from the two sons of Abraham. The divine elective grace selected Jacob and passed by Esau; "for the children, being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her (Rebecca), The elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. xxv. 22, 23; Rom. ix. 11, 12). Then the stream of election broadens and the people of Israel are chosen to receive the special blessings and privileges of the redemptive revelation, and to be the bearers of the divine grace to the nations of the earth. Here, also, God is wholly the giver; all that Israel has to do is to receive the blessing and carry out the divine will. "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all peoples; but because the Lord loveth you, and because he would keep the oath which he sware unto your fathers" (Deut. vii. 6-8). The principle of election is fol-

lowed all through the history of Israel in God's prosecution of the work of redemption. The prophets, priests, and kings, and all God's instruments in the establishment of the kingdom, are called of God to their respective tasks. The Judges, Saul, David, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, were all chosen by God for their particular work. Finally, the messianic prophecies point to the Christ as pre-eminent God's Chosen One, elected for His highest tasks and made the recipient of His greatest blessings (Is. xlii. 1). The peculiarity of this Old Testament election is that it is concerned exclusively with God's historical process of redemption. The future life and the eternal blessedness were not yet revealed. The horizon of revelation in this stage was the present life. The blessings which God bestowed were temporal, and the chief end of the election was service in the kingdom on earth. As it was an election for time, so it was an election in time; there is no word as yet of an eternal decree of God as the foundation of the choice.

The doctrine—like all the doctrines of the Bible—is deepened and enlarged rather than changed in the New Testament. The old point of view is retained, while new and far higher points of view are attained. The twelve apostles are called and chosen for their great work in the establishment of the kingdom of God in its Christian form (Luke vi. 13-16). "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide" (John xv. 16). So Paul was separated from his mother's womb and called, through God's grace, that he might preach Christ among the Gentiles (Gal. i. 15, 16). This was still the temporal election for temporal purposes. No mention was made as yet of a fixed and eternal element. One of the Twelve, though elected and called, frustrated the divine grace and became a reprobate. The Old Testament idea of national election also appears in the New Testament. Israel is

still the Chosen People, but God's election is enlarged to take in the Gentiles, and when Israel rejects the grace of Christ its former prerogatives are taken from it, and it loses its place in the kingdom of God. This is the subject with which Paul is engaged in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of the Epistle to the Romans—a passage which refers primarily to the great question of national election, and is intended to vindicate God's righteousness in His rejection of the Jews by showing that this is due to their own refusal to accept the Messiah, and that it is only temporary. Whatever conclusions respecting individual election may be drawn from these chapters must be derived from it by way of inference, for it is not directly concerned with individuals.

The deeper New Testament view begins with the election of the Christ, which, as we have seen, was predicted by the Old Testament prophets. He is pre-eminently God's elect. He receives the divine call and the assurance of his election at the time of his baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" "This is my Son, my chosen" (Matt. iii. 17; Luke ix. 35). But his election is not merely to earthly service in the kingdom, though that forms a part of it; he is chosen to be the eternal King of the everlasting kingdom. Moreover, his election does not take place merely in time; it is an eternal election (Eph. iii. 11; 1 Pet. i. 20). The election of believers corresponds to that of Christ and the eternal salvation revealed through him. They are indeed often called elect in a way that throws no light upon the nature of their election, but designates them merely as members of the church of Christ, which is the true "Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 16), the Chosen People of the New Dispensation, which has entered into the heritage of Israel's blessings. In a similar way they are called the "saints" or the "called." But we do not have to look far to discover that in many places

in the New Testament the name "elect" has a far deeper meaning. In the first place, the election is derived from the eternal purpose of God; it is the result of his predestination or foreordination. In the second place, it is an election to all the privileges and blessings of redemption, especially to the final blessedness. In that wonderful passage in Ephesians (i. 3-6) Paul represents believers as "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world," as "foreordained unto adoption as sons, according to the good pleasure of God's will," as "foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will."

The object of the election is said to be, "that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love," that we should attain the "adoption of sons," that "we should be unto the praise of his glory," that we should receive the "inheritance" of redemption (Ephesians i. 3-14). In the Epistle to the Romans (viii. 28-30) Paul traces in glowing language from the eternal purpose to the eternal glory. "For whom he foreknew he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren: and whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Notice that here also the end is represented as sonship in God's kingdom. Peter speaks of believers as "elect . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 2). The foreknowledge referred to in this passage and in Rom. viii. 28, may be that omniscience of God which we must think of as preceding His decree, and which is to be distinguished from His foreknowledge in the theological sense of the term; but it is more likely that it is the foreknowledge of the divine appropriation of the objects of His love and practically

the same as His foreordination. The latter view is taken by many even of those theologians who deny the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. Luke speaks of believers as "ordained to eternal life" (Acts xiii. 48).

With regard to these New Testament teachings respecting election and predestination, four things are to be said. In the first place, the doctrine is always taught with a practical purpose, namely, to strengthen God's people in their confidence, in the midst of the trials and difficulties of the Christian life. The motive is well brought out in the eighth chapter of Romans (vv. 33, 34, 38, 39): "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that shall condemn? . . . I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Secondly, the same books of the New Testament which emphasize predestination most strongly teach the universal purpose of the provision for salvation. Thirdly, these same books lay the greatest stress upon the necessity of personal faith in order to justification and salvation. This is pre-eminently the case with the Epistle to the Romans. But faith is man's own free act. Fourthly, and finally, while the doctrine of election implies that the rest of mankind are excluded from salvation, the New Testament always represents the ground of their exclusion to be their own sin freely committed.

II. We come now to the great historical forms which this doctrine has assumed. They stand like sentries barring our way as we attempt to advance, and we can reach no satisfactory understanding of this difficult subject until we have reckoned with them.

The most famous form of the doctrine, and the one which on the whole has exerted the greatest influence

upon the practice and the theology of the church, is that which is associated with the names of the two men who stand, in many respects, foremost in the ranks of Christian theologians, Augustin and Calvin. According to this view, God from all eternity determined to permit Adam to fall, and that in consequence all his descendants should come into the world condemned to eternal punishment on account of his sin and totally unable to save themselves. Out of this mass of fallen and helpless men He determined also, from all eternity, to choose a certain number and appoint them unto eternal life, providing for them salvation through Jesus Christ. This election or predestination was arbitrary, in the sense that it was not occasioned by anything outside of the divine will. God was not moved to it by any foresight of faith and obedience in the elect. His decree of election was wholly unconditioned. All that the elect have God gives them. He provides the Saviour. He enters their souls with irresistible grace, and works faith and repentance in them. He justifies, sanctifies, and saves them. From first to last all is of God. The believer's will becomes free only when God's irresistible grace has made it free, and then it is free only for the good. The rest of mankind are not elected to destruction, but simply left in their sin and helplessness. God does indeed by a decree of reprobation assign them to eternal punishment, but their sin for which they are punished is their own, and not the result of the divine decree. More commonly those who hold the doctrine prefer to speak of preterition rather than reprobation. God simply passes by the non-elect and leaves them to the just consequences of their sins.

No one who is acquainted with the history of the Augustinian or Calvinistic theology, and knows how great an influence for good it has had upon the church of Christ, will speak of the doctrine which has just been given merely in the language of disparagement. Calvinism has

had one great and most praiseworthy object, to exalt God. It has aimed to bring men to the realization of their utter dependence upon God for all things here and hereafter. Believers owe their faith not to themselves or anything in them, but to God alone, working through Christ and the Holy Spirit. The practical effect of this doctrine has been to make strong Christians. The men who had come to believe that they were nothing and God everything, and yet that God was working in them and through them, could do their work in the world, since God gave it to them to do, without fear of men or the devil. The Protestants of Geneva, the Huguenots of France, the Covenanters of Scotland, the Puritans of the English Civil War, and our own Pilgrim Fathers, got the iron in their blood from their Calvinism. But there is another side to this doctrine. It reduces human freedom to a mere name, so far as spiritual things are concerned. Faith, instead of being the free personal surrender of man's will to God is a divine act, wrought in the soul by overmastering power. Moreover, the doctrine throws a baleful light upon the divine righteousness. The non-elect never have the opportunity for salvation. It is to no purpose to say that they are justly condemned for their sins; for the sin is not really theirs but Adam's, and they are condemned for that which they have absolutely no power to help. If the arrangement by which Adam stood probation for the race was of God's appointment, then the sin and guilt and misery which resulted to the race were also of His appointment. Undoubtedly many who profess to hold the genuine Calvinistic doctrine find some way to evade its ethical difficulties at the expense of their logic. But the doctrine itself is open to insuperable objection. It stands the test neither of Scripture nor of reason.

The most important rival theory bears the name of the Dutch theologian Arminius, but it was known long before his day, and is now held by multitudes who do not call

themselves Arminians. The doctrine has been presented in two forms, which are at bottom the same. According to the first form God's decree of predestination or election concerns the class of believers. God from eternity determined to save all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and to condemn all who reject His grace. But when the Arminians are pressed to explain the relation in which individuals stand to the divine plan, they state the doctrine in a second form: God from eternity determined to save those individuals whom He foreknew would exercise faith and obedience, or the divine decree, so far as it relates to the destiny of individuals, is conditioned upon the foreknowledge.

One cannot but feel respect for the moral earnestness of Arminianism. If human responsibility is to be maintained and the divine righteousness vindicated, the reality of human freedom must be admitted. Only upon this condition can the Gospel be offered freely to men, and the call be given to all who will to drink the water of life. Between a theory of election which shuts a large fraction of mankind helplessly and irremediably out from salvation, and the Arminianism which opens wide the gates of Christ's redemption to all who will enter, whether Christian or Jew or heathen, it seems as if there could be no question what our choice should be. Still, when all is said, Arminianism also has its difficulties. Its weakness lies in the direction of the strength of Calvinism. It lays the emphasis too strongly upon the human factor in conversion and the Christian life. It does not bring into sufficient prominence the believer's dependence upon God. It is commonly connected with a doctrine of possible sinless perfection, which does harm by lowering the standard of the divine law to the level of human infirmity. Arminianism, likewise, fails to justify itself philosophically. To say that the divine decree of predestination is based upon the divine foreknowledge is to state the matter altogether super-

ficially. How could God have any foreknowledge until He had formed His plan? If He foreknew that certain men would accept His grace if it was offered to them, and that certain others would reject it, and then decreed to create them and to put them in the circumstances in which He foresaw they would make these choices, then there must have been some real sense in which He foreordained these acts and their consequences. So strongly have some of the more thoughtful advocates of this theory felt the embarrassment of their position that they have withdrawn to the position that God predestinates only the class of believers, and have denied His foreknowledge with respect to the choices of individuals, thus maintaining their doctrine at the expense of the divine absoluteness.

III. The question therefore arises, Is it possible to formulate a consistent doctrine of predestination, which shall combine the elements of truth to be found in both the great theories and avoid the mistakes of both, a doctrine which shall be Calvinistic in its assertion of the divine sovereignty and yet do justice to real truth to which Arminianism bears witness? I think it is possible. As Professor Fisher has well said, "It is a growing conviction of students of Scripture and of philosophy that, on the subject before us, there is more than one hemisphere of truth. That which both the Calvinist and Arminian chiefly prized was truth, not error. What each contended against was the supposed implications of a proposition which was valued by his opponent from its relation to a set of implications of a very different sort. Each connected with his antagonist's thesis inferences which that antagonist repudiated" (*North American Review*, vol. cxxviii., p. 303). In order to state the true view, we must go back to the doctrine of the divine plan. When studying that subject we found abundant reason for the assumption that God's eternal purpose extends to all things in time—in other words, that He has, to use the language

of the Assembly's Catechism, "foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." But if this be so, the final destiny of men, with all the events which lead up to it, must be included in the divine plan. To omit this great class of events from God's decree, would be to leave it imperfect and to make God finite instead of infinite. Whatever takes place in time was decreed in eternity. If a portion of the race are saved and the rest lost, it must be because God meant that it should be so. Predestination is only a special case under the general principle of the divine plan. It cannot be denied by any one who admits the omniscience and the omnipotence of God.

Let us, however, make the same qualifications which we made when considering the eternal plan of God. In the first place, there is nothing in this view inconsistent with human freedom. God himself established that freedom, and made it a reality. His plan did not turn it into a mere illusion, but simply forestalled it and gave it the conditions for its exercise. By His omniscience God knew all the possible free choices of all possible men under all the possible circumstances in which they might be placed. In forming the plan which He adopted, He took up all the free choices which men have made, and made them constituent elements of His purpose, thereby turning them from possibilities into certainties, yet in such a way as to leave them in the fullest sense free. Only when the decree is formed can we speak of foreknowledge, which has to do not with possibilities but with realities. Now under this decree men act with perfect freedom. Some accept God's grace; others reject it; but both classes are in the truest sense free.

But, in the second place, we must take into account the distinction between the efficient and the permissive decree of God. He does not stand in the same relation to good and to evil. The good has its source in Him, and He seeks by every means to promote it. The evil He hates

and turns from ; He has no share at all in it ; the most He does is not to prevent it. It is therefore only in reference to the predestination of believers that we can speak of an efficient decree on God's part. In the case of those who reject God's grace the decree is permissive only, except in so far as their punishment is concerned. Now while it is true that the believer's faith is a free choice, yet in all that precedes it and all that follows it, God's efficiency is concerned, while even the faith itself is divinely caused in so far as God supplies the conditions without which the free choice would be impossible. Christ, the Holy Spirit, forgiveness, the new heart, the new life, sanctification, perseverance, the final glory, are all gifts of God's grace. Granting, as we must, that God has taken the believer's faith up into His plan as a constituent element, and granting that it is an indispensable element, still it is altogether insignificant when compared with the blessings which God bestows. It is in no respect the ground of the divine election ; that is the pure unmerited grace of God. Faith, as we shall see when we come to study the subject more carefully, is a receptivity rather than a causality. It is like the willingness of the man in peril to let himself be rescued—a willingness which is indeed indispensable, but in no way the cause of his deliverance. But God's relation to the sinner is very different. His sin is of his own making. His abuse of freedom separates him from God and brings the divine wrath upon him. If he perseveres in his sin in spite of the divine grace and forbearance, the most that God does is to let him go on in his evil ways and to inflict upon him the punishment which he has drawn upon himself. While therefore we use the terms election and predestination in their full meaning when speaking of believers, we do not use them with reference to those who are lost, nor does the Scripture do so. The latter class do indeed come into the scope of the divine plan, and we can speak of

their sin as permissively foreordained, but that is all. Theologians sometimes designate the divine decree, so far as it relates to this class, as a decree of reprobation; but the term applies not to that part of the decree which has to do with their sin, but only with the part which relates to their final punishment.

These two qualifications, derived from the general principles of the divine plan, serve to remove some of the chief difficulties in the way of the doctrine before us. But there is still another point to which reference must be made. The divine decree of predestination or election is not inconsistent with the universal intent of Christ's work and the full and free offer of the Gospel based upon it. The same plan which foreordains all the events connected with human probation and destiny foreordains the Saviour's work of salvation as a provision for the salvation of all men. God willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, and makes the honest offer of His grace to all men; nay, more, we have reason to believe that He presses His grace home upon every soul and ceases only to urge it when men in their freedom utterly refuse to accept it. Now the fact that God's plan also includes the certainty of the result in the case of each individual does not make the universality of redemption less a reality. We need not have recourse, in order to explain the apparent contradiction, to the old distinction between the secret and the revealed will of God, though, rightly understood, it has its value. God's plan does not turn His providence in grace and redemption into a mere mechanism, nor does it make human freedom an illusion. The certainty it produces is a certainty for God alone, and not for men; it is no necessity. Unless we are to bring the universe to a deadlock, we must admit that the divine plan in no way interferes with the divine grace and human freedom. No man is ever prevented from accepting Jesus Christ freely offered to him

in the Gospel by anything in the foreordaining purpose of God ; all that will ever prevent him is his own free choice. Therefore God in perfect sincerity offers him His grace in Christ. I admit that, when all is said, there is a difficulty left. But it is only the old difficulty, which meets us outside of religion as truly as in it, the difficulty of bringing together in our thought God's infinitude and our freedom. It is a difficulty which is inherent in our finite minds when dealing with this transcendent subject. We do not let it trouble us at all in practical matters. There is no more need that we should do so in our theological investigations.

Our doctrine of election and predestination is, then, briefly stated, as follows : God by His eternal decree has predestinated believers to eternal life, not on the ground of their foreseen faith, yet not without the knowledge of their faith on the ground of the Saviour's work as a matter of pure unmerited grace ; and this predestination is such as to leave human freedom intact and to be wholly consistent with the universal scope of Christ's redemptive work and the universal offer of the Gospel. Election does not have regard merely to men as fallen, but to all the circumstances of men, the Fall included. This is not the doctrine of the older Calvinism, yet it may be called Calvinistic as asserting all the essential truth of Calvinism in its historical opposition to Arminianism.

IV. It cannot be denied that the doctrine of predestination is to many minds, both in the church and out of it, a stumbling-block. It involves, as we have seen, some deep metaphysical problems, and can only with difficulty be so stated as to be intelligible. Is it, then, worth while to give it a place in the system of Christian doctrine ? Many Christians would pass it by altogether and concentrate Christian thought upon subjects more practically important, or that they think more im-

portant. Milton, who favored Arminianism, with a satire which was as exquisite as it was unfair, turned the subject over to the fallen angels in hell, and has told us in his immortal poem ("Paradise Lost," Bk. ii., lines 555 seq.) how

"Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

No wonder he sums up the whole matter with the exclamation, "Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!" But in spite of Milton's opinion and that of many Christian thinkers more eminent as theologians than he, I cannot think that we should treat this doctrine thus. It is not a mere conclusion of philosophy, but a doctrine plainly and abundantly taught in the Scripture. What we need to do is not to discard it, but to use it in the same practical way in which it is employed in the Bible. It is not a doctrine over which the church of Christ can afford to become embroiled in theological controversy, but one to be used for the edifying and strengthening of the church and the individual. As regards the philosophical problems involved, there ought to be a large and generous toleration. All men will not think alike on such points. Immense harm has been done in the church by ill-advised and bitter controversies upon the speculative questions connected with this subject. One cannot but think that the Apostle Peter had this abuse of the doctrine in mind when he said of Paul's epistles—in which this doctrine is more fully presented than elsewhere in the New Testament: "Wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. iii. 16).

But looking at the subject practically the case is very

different. We need the strength and comfort which this doctrine alone can give us. The doctrine of election grounds the Christian life in God. It gives Him the initiative in the work of grace. It places the believer in a position of entire dependence upon Him. It makes the Christian's life, to use the expressive phrase of Horace Bushnell, "a plan of God." The whole process of education and sanctification by which the child of God is prepared for the heavenly blessedness is attributed to God. He is the controlling power in all our work and service. We work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, but it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. ii. 12). Our faith is something real and personal, but it has no merit and no spiritual power in it. Its value lies in the fact that by it we have been linked on to the eternal decree of God, and have back of us and around us the infinite power of the infinite God. He will see us through. He will not allow one of the Saviour's sheep to perish, and no one can pluck them out of His hand. The Christian who grasps these facts, who understands his absolute helplessness apart from God and Christ, and his unbounded strength, when united to God through Christ, has courage, cheerfulness, inspiration, and power in his work for God.

Viewing the doctrine in this practical light, we may adopt as our own the language of the Thirty-nine Articles of the English church: "The godly consideration of Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God."

XXIV.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

OUR Saviour likened the kingdom of heaven to "a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid ; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field " (Matt. xiii. 44). The parable may be applied with truth to the doctrine which we are about to consider, and which is so essential to the kingdom of God. More than once in the history of the church it has been the precious hidden treasure which God's people have prized so highly that they have been willing literally to sell all that they had for its possession and maintenance. So it was in the days of Paul, so at the time of the Protestant Reformation. Every great revival of spiritual life in the Christian church has been preceded or accompanied by a rediscovery of this truth and its reinstatement in its true place in the Christian system.

This doctrine is second to no other in practical importance. It is concerned with questions of such vital moment to every soul, How shall the sinner be reconciled with God? how shall he enter the kingdom of heaven? what shall he do that he may inherit eternal life? It tells us how Christ's redemptive work, and especially his atonement, are to be appropriated by sinful men.

We shall consider, first, justification or forgiveness, and then faith.

I. The forgiveness of sins is as truly a doctrine of the Old Testament as of the New. The difference between the two stages of revelation does not consist in their

teachings respecting the fact of forgiveness, but in the light they throw upon the divine basis of the fact and the mode in which forgiveness is to be obtained. There are no declarations in the New Testament of God's mercy and willingness to forgive stronger than some of those to be found in the Old. In the midst of the strict requirements of the Ten Commandments, God, while visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him, is said to show mercy unto a thousand generations of them that love Him and keep His commandments (Ex. xx. 5, 6). When Jehovah appeared to Moses on Sinai, His proclamation was, "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7). The sacrificial system, as we saw when examining the doctrine of the atonement, was a divine means for the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God, although the offerings of atonement were intrinsically inadequate for their purpose and availed only as God accepted them on the ground of the perfect sacrifice, as yet only vaguely revealed. But when men asked what they should do with regard to those profounder elements of sin, for which the sacrificial system made no provision, the only reply which could be given them was that they should repent, return to their obedience, and trust God's forgiving grace.

It is only when we come to the New Testament that we learn on what the divine forgiveness is founded, and by what means it is to be secured. The Saviour connected forgiveness with faith in himself, proclaiming that "the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Matt. ix. 6). By the wonderful parable of the Prodigal Son he taught that the heavenly Father is always ready to forgive His wandering children. Just before his death, in con-

nection with the establishment of that sacred rite which was to commemorate his death throughout the ages of Christian history, he declared that the sacramental cup symbolized the blood of the covenant—that is, the Messiah's covenant predicted by the prophets (Jer. xxxi. 31-34)—“which is shed for many unto remission of sins” (Matt. xxvi. 26-29).

But it was only after the Saviour had died and ascended into heaven, that the full truth could be taught. Then the disciples went everywhere, proclaiming forgiveness on the ground of Christ's sacrificial death to all who would have faith in him. The doctrine is presented in its great evangelical outlines by all the apostles, but by none with more doctrinal precision and force of argument than by Paul. It is to him that we must turn, if we desire to learn the full meaning of the doctrine of justification by faith.

There are difficulties in understanding Paul. They are due partly to the inability of our language to render exactly the Greek words which are the technical terms in the apostle's discussions, and partly to the differences of our religious surroundings and modes of thought from those of his day. But whoever will take the pains to overcome these difficulties and attain Paul's point of view, will be repaid by securing the clearest and most far-reaching insight into the system of Gospel truth which the New Testament affords. Paul's starting-point was the question, How shall a man be justified, that is, become right with God? how shall he secure the righteousness or rightness which will render him acceptable to God? The prevalent Jewish notion—a notion derived from the later teachings of the synagogue and not to be fairly inferred from the teachings of the Old Testament—was that good works justify. The Jewish teachers argued that if a man keep the law, he thus works out a righteousness which secures the divine favor. Now Paul did not deny that such a righteous-

ness by the works of the law would be sufficient, if it were actually attained. On the contrary, he declared that God will "render to every man according to his works; to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life" (Rom. ii. 6, 7). But Paul denied that as a matter of fact any man does attain such a righteousness by works. In the two epistles in which he especially discusses the subject of justification, namely, those to the Romans and the Galatians, he declares that all men are sinners, Jews and Gentiles alike, and so are unable to become right with God on the ground of their good works. This is the subject of the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, where, after having shown by the most cogent evidence that both heathen and Jews are sinners, he sums all up with the declaration, "There is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (iii. 23), and asserts that "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (iii. 20). Similarly in the Epistle to the Galatians he affirms that "no man is justified by the law in the sight of God;" "for as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written (Deut. xxvii. 26), Cursed is every one which continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them" (Gal. iii. 10, 11). It is that bondage and helplessness of sinful men, to which reference was made when we were examining the subject of sin. So far as God's laws are concerned, all men are bankrupts. His commandment is exceeding broad, and when we come to understand it, we see an end of all perfection (Ps. cxix. 96). Let a man love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself, and he will be right with God, but alas, who even begins to do it?

Now what can be done under these circumstances? If righteousness by works is impossible, what shall take its place? While men are separated from God by their sins,

they cannot take the first steps toward obedience and holiness. They cannot attain their chief end. Is there no way by which they may be put into right relations with God and thus enabled to become what God would have them? It is here that the great truth of justification by faith comes in to solve the problem. It is God's method of setting sinners right with Himself, in order that through the grace of Christ and the Holy Spirit He may save them unto the uttermost. The right relation to Himself, which men cannot earn by their good works, God gives as a matter of grace to those who accept it by faith. Instead of the wholly inadequate self-wrought righteousness which is of no avail, there is revealed in the Gospel "a righteousness of God from faith unto faith" (Rom. i. 17). This idea of a righteousness bestowed by God's grace was not wholly new. There are traces of it in Old Testament prophecy. But the New Testament righteousness of God is new in being clearly based upon the work of Christ. We are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith by his blood, to show his righteousness"—that is, God's judicial righteousness—"because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the Justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24-26). On the ground of what Christ has done through his atoning death, God bestows upon the sinner in pure grace, if he will accept it by faith, the right relation with Himself which the sinner cannot attain in his own strength by his own works; He justifies him, that is, sets him right. The sinner is forgiven. He becomes a child of God, an heir of heaven. The Father's smile is upon him. He is reconciled with God and has peace with Him. The Spirit beareth witness with his spirit that he is a child of the heavenly Father. God's

displeasure is removed. In a word, the sinner is forgiven, and this not in the merely negative sense of being delivered from punishment, but in the positive sense of being put right in all his personal relations to God. In this broad sense of the term forgiveness we may regard it as synonymous with justification. The righteousness of God, which He bestows upon all who receive it, is essentially His forgiving grace.

But justification is not an end in itself; it is only a means to an end, and that the chief end of man, his complete redemption in the kingdom of God. It brings the sinner into the kingdom of God, but the kingdom has still to come in its fulness in his soul. To be justified is not the same as to be saved. But justification is the beginning of salvation, and it has for its object complete salvation. The student of Christian truth who stops short with the doctrine of justification has only a partial and inadequate Gospel. God would never justify a man if He did not mean to save him. If justification by the works of the law is impossible, it does not follow that the keeping of the law is impossible. What Paul means when he says that we are not under the law but under grace (Rom. vi. 15) is that so far as our justification with God is concerned we cannot base our hopes upon the works of the law, our trust must be wholly in God's forgiving mercy. But he does not mean that we are not to obey the law or that we are under no obligation to obey it. On the contrary, he magnifies the law, declaring that it "is holy, and the commandment holy and righteous and good" (Rom. vii. 12), and he declares that the object of God's justifying grace is to put us in a position where we can obey the law and attain our chief end. Not that we shall ever thus be able to make our salvation anything but a matter of grace, but that along the track of grace, through the help of Christ and the Holy Spirit, we may attain the full salvation, entire holiness, and obedience in the perfected

kingdom of God. Thus Paul says in language which is a key to the whole New Testament doctrine of grace, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 3, 4). Justification is in order to the fulfilment of the law in God's kingdom. It receives its whole significance from this fact, and would be meaningless apart from it. In bestowing His justifying grace, the righteousness of God, in Paul's meaning of the term, upon us, God brings us into such a relation to Himself that the inward righteousness, at once His work and ours, can be wrought in us. The imputed righteousness—to use the familiar phrase of popular theology—is in order to the imparted righteousness.

This is the answer to the charge of immorality so often brought against the doctrine of justification—a charge for which, it must be confessed, some ground has been furnished by the loose way in which the doctrine has often been stated. If God merely forgave the sinner and left him a sinner, we could not vindicate the divine conduct from the charge of unrighteousness. In that case justification would be a mere indulgence for sin, and the question, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" to which Paul replied with an indignant "God forbid!" (Rom. vi. 1, 2), might well be answered in the affirmative. But this is furthest from the truth of the matter. Justification is but a part of God's great work, and significant only from its relation to the whole. As we saw when considering the elements in Christ's redemption, the priestly work cannot be separated from the kingly. The same Saviour who has secured forgiveness through his death is pledged to save us by his life. We may be confident of this very thing, that he which be-

gan a good work in us will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. i. 6). Moreover, justification is not granted to every sinner indiscriminately, but only to those who believe on Christ, and faith is such an act of the human will as implies that the whole set of the sinner's life, when he has received the divine forgiveness, will be against sin and toward holiness.

But while I emphasize thus strongly the relation of justification to the sanctification and complete salvation of the sinner, let me also emphasize the clear distinction between the justification and the sanctification, between the imputed righteousness and the imparted or inherent righteousness. The two are not the same, and they do not run into each other. When a bone is broken, it must be set before the process of healing can begin, and the setting is in order that the fragments may knit together and unite; but the setting and the healing are wholly distinct. Justification is the setting of the broken bone; it brings the soul into its true relation to God; it has sanctification for its object. Sanctification is the healing, a process wholly different and wholly distinct. Justification is God's work; sanctification is the united work of God and man. This is the point of controversy between Roman Catholics and Protestants. The former confuse justification and sanctification. According to the Canons of the Council of Trent, "Justification consists not in the mere remission of sins, but in the sanctification and renewal of the inner man by the voluntary reception of God's grace and gifts." Accordingly, justification is progressive. It is not until a man's faith has become manifested in good works that he is justified. But Protestants claim that justification is complete from the first. The father of the parable does not leave his prodigal son outside the house until he has shown his repentance by his works; but he goes forth to meet him, and falls upon his neck and kisses him, and has the best robe put on

him, had a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet, and kills for him the fatted calf. The sinner is not taken back into the divine favor by degrees, cautiously and grudgingly; but he is restored to all his privileges as a child of God. This is the only way to make the work of sanctification, which immediately begins, complete. It is a work which can go forward only after the relation of fatherhood and sonship is fully re-established. It is only by such love that the sinner's love can be made perfect. "We love him because he first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). Thus only can that joy and peace and cheerful courage which are the condition of the Christian life be realized. Accordingly, our Protestant churches have jealously guarded this doctrine of a complete justification. While they have defended it against Roman Catholicism, they have also maintained it against those Protestants who have taught a work righteousness, or have attempted to mingle together justification and sanctification. There are those who fear that to admit the fulness and freeness of the divine forgiveness will lower the standard of morality and religion. But generally they do not understand the true meaning of the doctrine of justification by God's free grace. And whether they understand it or not, they greatly mistake the working of the human soul. There is no motive so powerful as that of love and gratitude. The Christian who realizes what God has done for him, who stands in the midst of the divine grace, seeing it above and beneath and on every side of him, and knowing that it has been given him entirely apart from any merit of his, has an impulse and a motive to holiness and Christian service compared with which all other motives are feeble.

II. Our subject is justification by faith. We have considered the divine element, justification; now let us look at the human element, faith. The doctrine of faith is one of large relations. Faith does not belong to the sphere of Christianity alone, but is a fact of the univer-

sal religious life, and also of the practical, or, as we often call it, secular life. It is one of the fundamental and essential activities of our human nature. Christianity can lay no exclusive claim to it; its pre-eminency lies in the fact that it furnishes faith with its highest exercise and fullest satisfaction. We need not, therefore, go to the Bible merely to discover the nature of faith. We can get our information directly from life.

What then is faith? There are certain inadequate definitions which are widely maintained and which have produced great confusion. I will refer to two of them. The first, which has perhaps the most extensive currency, makes faith an assent to truth upon the exhibition of appropriate evidence. Now all faith undoubtedly is accompanied by such assent, and it may properly be called an element of faith. But it is far from being the central and essential element. There may be such an assent and yet no real faith. The apostle James fitly describes the faith that goes no farther than assent: "Thou believest that God is one; thou does well: the demons also believe, and shudder" (James ii. 19). The demons are altogether orthodox; they give their assent to the great article of the Hebrew creed (Deut. vi. 4), but it leads only to dread and hatred, not to faith. In all ages of the Christian church there has been this faith of mere assent, while all true heart-faith was absent. This is one of the half-truths which often work more mischief than whole falsehoods. No one can measure the harm that this inadequate notion of faith has worked, and is still working, among Christians.

The second imperfect definition to which I referred is that which owes its origin to the description of faith given by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in that wonderful chapter in which is presented the muster-roll of the heroes of faith under the Old Dispensation: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things

not seen" (Heb. xi. 1). There is not the slightest evidence that this was intended for a scientific definition of faith. Rather it describes it, by pointing to one of its prominent characteristics. It is true that faith has to do with things which are not perceived through the medium of the senses. But this is not the essential element of faith. When the attempt is made to illustrate the nature of faith by the example of the scientist who has to do with invisible atoms and ethers and forces, the result is a very pretty comparison between faith in one of its less essential characteristics and the methods of science, but we have no true analogy and no real light thrown upon the nature of faith. It is only in a figure of speech that we can call the scientist's belief in the invisible elements of the universe faith. In order to turn his belief into real faith, we should have to suppose on his part a recognition of the Creator of the universe, which, alas, in many of our scientists, is not found. So in the spiritual sphere, we may have ever so strong a conviction of the existence of an unseen world, yea, of the unseen God and Christ, and the life eternal, and yet not have real faith. I do not think that this definition has done so much harm as the other, but it has led to great confusion of thought and consequent misunderstanding of fundamental Christian truth.

What is faith? The answer can be given in a single word: it is *trust*. It is primarily a relation of one person to another. We cannot have faith in things or in the truth, unless there is a person back of them, who is the primary object of our faith. Moreover, faith implies dependence on the one side, and strength and ability on the other. There is a person who relies, and a person who is relied upon. The trust implies receptivity upon the side of the one who has faith, and some kind of communication and bestowal on the part of the one in whom he has faith. To these particulars we may add the further one,

that faith is an activity of the whole soul, of the intellect, the sensibility, and the will. There is an intellectual element in it; in order to trust we must know the person whom we trust, and know something about him. This is where the assent to truth comes in, or rather begins to come in. Then there is an element of feeling in faith; we cannot stand in this relation to another person without experiencing certain emotions respecting him, such as love, reverence, admiration, or the like. Finally, there is an element of will in faith, and this is the distinctive element. This is what makes faith a moral activity. There is choice in it. We may exercise it or abstain from it. There is always in true faith a laying of our will, to an extent greater or less, into the keeping of another will. These three elements are not always present in the same proportion. Now one is more prominent, now another. But always in its deepest essence faith is a matter of the will, of the free choice.

The simplest illustration of faith is that which comes to us from childhood. The child can do very little for itself. Its wants are supplied, its comforts furnished, its choices made, chiefly by others, by parents and friends. There is no relation in which there is greater dependence on the one side and more abundant bestowal on the other. It is true that to a large extent the trust of the child is instinctive, and that it is not a matter of free rational choice as yet to any considerable degree. But this spontaneous trust, so beautiful and touching, and so rarely put to shame, is not only a type of the higher moral trust, which comes with the development of the power of choice and the moral nature, but it is the initial exercise of the free will itself. Small though the element of freedom may be, doubtless it is always present. And what could be more lovely? Like the flowers of the field, which neither toil nor spin, these children in their childish faith do nothing, yet hold themselves open to receive everything.

In the wider spheres of life faith is an essential activity of human nature. Society is possible only as men trust one another, standing in relations of mutual dependence and receptivity. Without faith business would languish and come to an end. A business man's *credit*, the trust which he is able to inspire in other men, is always his best capital. In how many hundreds of my fellow-men must I have faith in order to go to bed at night with the quiet confidence that my to-morrow's wants will be provided for! How do I know that my correspondents will fulfil the commissions I have given them, and the post-office do its work, and railroads and steamboats carry the mails, and my letters come to me, with all in my business that is so vitally dependent upon them? Faith, trust—and a faith and trust that are seldom brought to confusion.

We come to a higher exercise of faith when we enter the sphere of religion, but it is the same in kind. The relation is not between man and man, but between man and God. There is, however, the same dependence and need on the one side, and the same strength and bestowal on the other, and faith here also is trust, an act of the will, a putting of ourselves into an attitude of receptivity that what we need may be given to us. And this is what makes the difference between piety and irreligion, whether among heathens or Christians. A man may have altogether inadequate or even erroneous views of God, and yet have faith in the god or gods he knows. The idolater who bows down to stocks and stones may have faith, and so be religious, while the most orthodox Christian who accepts the *ipsissima verba* of the Westminster Confession may have none.

As I said, the difference between Christian faith and the faith of natural religion is not in the nature of this activity, but in the nature of its object. Christianity gives faith its highest exercise and its truest satisfaction ;

therein lies the peculiarity of Christian faith. It is an eye which is made to see; it remains the same eye, so long as it be used, whatever it may see. It is a hand which may be reached out for any gift, but it remains a hand alike when a stone is given it instead of bread, and when it receives the ambrosia of the gods. But what a blessed thing it is to find the true object of our faith, to see with our eye and to grasp with our hand the most precious things of life! Christian faith lays hold upon the one thing needful. It is a trust upon the true God and Jesus Christ His Son. It receives the blessing of God's redemptive grace.

We are now prepared to see how faith justifies. The faith of justification is the sinner's personal trust in Jesus Christ the Saviour. Moved by God's Spirit, attracted by the invitations of the Gospel, feeling his dependence and need, seeing in Christ the supply of all his wants, he freely puts himself into the Saviour's hands that he may be justified and saved by him, giving himself to God through Christ. This trust involves a self-abnegation, a self-emptying, a turning away from all self-help, an utter renunciation of all reliance upon self-wrought righteousness. It is an act of will—free, rational—made in view of the truth. It involves the highest exercise of the power of choice, for it is concerned with the chief end of life. But while it is in this sense an activity of the will, it is a receptive activity; it is a stretching out of an empty hand to receive an undeserved gift. Now faith justifies because it thus opens the soul to the grace of God and Christ. It is because the sinner has thus put himself at the disposal of Christ for time and for eternity, to be moulded and shaped by him, because he has given up all trust in himself and thrown himself upon Christ in entire dependence, that God can for Christ's sake forgive him and reinstate him in all the lost privileges of sonship. By his faith he is united to Christ, and God sees him not as he is in him-

self, but as he is in Christ, and for Christ's sake He forgives him and begins upon the work of sanctifying him. The sinner in childlike trust has cast himself upon God and Christ, and he has received from them the riches of forgiving grace and the assurance of sanctifying grace. How different such faith as this is from the acceptance of a system of doctrines or the yielding to the authority of a church! How immense the result! Horace Bushnell has described the true saving faith in the simplicity of the truth: "Christian faith," he says, "is the faith of a transaction. It is not the committing of one's thought in assent to any proposition, but the trusting of one's being to a *being*, there to be rested, kept, guided, moulded, governed, and possessed forever." "It gives you God, fills you with God in immediate, experimental knowledge, puts you in possession of all there is in him, and allows you to be invested with his character itself" (Life of Bushnell, p. 192 seq.).

We can thus see why there is nothing meritorious in faith. It is indeed a good work—the best work we ever do; it is a work in all reality. But it has no merit. Faith is valuable not for what it is but for what it receives. It is a vessel which is intrinsically of no worth, but only for what it contains. It is a hand which may receive a gift but can give none. This is the nature of faith always. Some people have the notion that if their faith were only strong enough or intense enough they could accomplish anything with it; they regard it as an omnipotent power. But nothing could be more mistaken. The power is all of God, and faith is only the medium through which it is received. If God should withhold His gift faith would remain poor empty faith. It does not follow that because in the days of Christ and the apostles miracles were wrought through the instrumentality of faith, our faith in these days of God's quieter providential workings is less genuine. It was not the faith which

wrought the miracles, but God who wrought them through the faith. If God had a reason for miracles then which He does not have now, it does not follow that our faith is any the less real. The empty vessel received one kind of filling then; it receives another kind now. That is all the difference. The vessel itself may be as good, or better—and certainly the gifts are better for us. No amount of faith will compel God to give what He does not regard as best for us. Faith as a grain of mustard-seed is sufficient to remove mountains, if God has them ready for us to remove; and faith mountain-great is insufficient to move a mustard-seed, if God deems it not best that it should be moved. Now such an activity as this, which derives all its worth from what it receives, can have no merit. It leaves the sinner utterly dependent upon God. All that he has he has received. All that he hopes for will come to him of pure unmerited grace. There is no merit in the fact that the man in peril, around whom a rope is thrown, does not cast it off, that he co-operates with those who are saving him. Yet he might never be saved unless he thus freely gave himself up, and the sinner would never be saved unless he had faith. Looking at it merely as an indispensable condition, faith has a very considerable importance; but looking at it in relation to the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, it is as nothing.

I have spoken here particularly of the first act of faith, the justifying faith by which the sinner enters the kingdom of God. But it is to be remembered that faith is essential all through the Christian life. It is not only the condition of justification, but also of sanctification. The just shall live by faith. All God's gifts come to men through its medium. It enters into character, for it involves a permanent choice and is concerned with the supreme choice of life. At the first it is an act, a "transaction," as Bushnell called it; but it becomes a permanent attitude of the soul toward God and Jesus Christ.

We often talk as if faith were only for this life. But Paul tells us that faith, like love and hope, abides (1 Cor. xiii. 13). It will not be "changed to sight," as we sometimes say, but when the time of higher vision comes, faith will merely find a higher exercise. Through all eternity it will be the hand which will receive God's largess. We shall never reach a point where our relation to God and Christ will be any other than that of trust and dependence.

Such is faith, and such justification by faith. Whoever understands this doctrine understands the Gospel. Whoever has a personal faith in Jesus Christ, possesses in him wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30).

XXV.

THE NEW LIFE

LET us take up once more the clew which has guided us through all our wanderings in the mazes of theology—the doctrine of God's redemptive kingdom. The kingdom is the chief end of God's plan and of man's existence. The sinner's misery and guilt consist in the fact that he is falling short of his chief end, since by his sin he is outside of the kingdom and unable in his own strength to re-enter it. Christ by his redemptive work has provided a way for the sinner to become once more a member of the kingdom and attain his chief end in it. Through the divine justification or forgiveness, appropriated by faith, he is admitted to the kingdom so far as his outward relations are concerned; God's grace transforms displeasure into favor and restores the sinner to his lost sonship, making him an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ. But justification, with its change of outward relations, is only a means to an end, namely, to the attainment of the chief end, the actual redemption. There is therefore need of an internal change, a transformation of the spiritual life, an actual achievement of sonship. Amnesty looks forward to reconstruction and the attainment of all the ends of citizenship. It is of this new life, the actual realization of man's chief end in the soul itself, so far as this result is attained in the present world, that I wish to speak at this time.

I. The new life begins in that great spiritual crisis which we call the change of heart. This is a revolution of the most radical character. The whole bent and direc-

tion of the soul is changed. As we have seen, the sinner's supreme choice is altogether wrong. He makes self and the world his chief end. He worships and serves the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. i. 25). He is self-centered, revolving in the narrow orbit of a life given wholly to finite things. In the change of heart there is a complete reversal of the choice. God and His kingdom, man's true supreme end, are chosen. The man's life is no longer self-centered, but God-centered. The narrow orbit is deserted and the soul enters upon the career of eternal life. Sin is no longer the governing principle, for love has taken its place. It would not be true to say that the change of heart is confined to the will, for the whole man is involved in it; there is an intellectual transformation and a transformation of the sensibility. But the change begins in the will, and in the highest element of the will, the free choice, and reaches the other faculties of the man as it moves out from this center. The heart, according to the scriptural meaning of the term, is the man himself, the inmost core and kernel of personality; it is the free will. The heart is the seat of character, which originates in the great permanent choices of the soul. The change of heart is the beginning of a new character.

The greatness and radical nature of this change cannot be too strongly emphasized. The Bible terms which are employed to describe it are none too strong. It is as John declares it (John i. 13), a new birth; a birth from above, without which a man cannot enter the kingdom of God (John iii. 3-8). It is a new creation: "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). It is a resurrection from the dead: the believer has passed out of death into life (John v. 24; 1 John iii. 14). This language is, it is true, figurative, but it has none the less a definite and perfectly intelligible meaning: the change of heart involves a transformation in the spiritual

sphere so great that it can only be adequately illustrated by the greatest of all transformations in the natural sphere—creation, birth, and death.

This change may be considered from two points of view, the divine and the human. It is the work of God through the Holy Spirit, and it is the sinner's own work. Theologians commonly distinguish the two aspects of the one spiritual transformation as *regeneration* and *conversion*. God changes the heart; man changes it. Of these two factors regeneration takes the precedence. The sinner is utterly helpless apart from God; he cannot take the first step in the direction of salvation; his sin holds him in bondage. His inability is none the less real because it is moral and not natural. The invisible chains of our own forging hold us quite as strongly as any that God might have forged in our original constitution. Consequently the need of God's grace is absolute; no other release is possible. This grace has come to us and all men objectively through the atoning work of Christ. But it must also come to us subjectively through the inward work of the Holy Spirit. We are justified on the ground of what Christ has done as high-priest; we can be regenerated and sanctified only through the work of Christ the King, operating upon our hearts through his Spirit. Otherwise salvation is impossible, man's chief end can be reached in no other way. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" "Ye must be born from above" (John iii. 3, 7).

This work of the Spirit in regeneration has a mysterious element in it; it takes place, in part at least, out of the sphere of our consciousness. The access of God and Christ to our souls through the Spirit is a fact to which consciousness testifies; every man hears the divine voice in conscience and feels the strivings of the God within urging him to follow the better way, and every Christian has the witness of the Spirit and a personal fellowship

with the Father and Christ through Him. But this is the region of the supernatural ; there is in it an infinite factor which evades our attempts to analyze and understand it. We know the work of the Spirit in regeneration from its results : "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John iii. 8). We know that we have been born because we have entered the new life. We know that of ourselves we could not have produced the result. We cannot doubt that the true cause is that which revelation describes and the workings of which we know in our experience both before and after the change of heart, namely, that Spirit of God which is also the Spirit of Christ.

The Spirit does not work without means. The New Testament lays great emphasis upon the "word," or the truth, as the instrumentality especially employed by God in regeneration : "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth" (James i. 18) ; we have been "begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth" (1 Pet. i. 23). But we are not to understand that the Spirit works, so to speak, at arm's-length or at second-hand ; rather He uses the truth by making it directly effectual ; He gives it an efficacy which it would not and could not have in itself. The word without the Spirit is an arm of flesh. It was only when the Spirit brooded upon the face of the waters that the divine word worked with creative power ; there must be a like moving of the Spirit in our souls. There is also besides the outward word of the preached Gospel an inward word of God in every soul, and doubtless, as has already been intimated, there is a working of the Spirit apart from the word.

We must not regard the working of the Spirit in regeneration as physical. We often call regeneration a

“miracle of grace.” But we must remember that all such language is figurative. The true miracle belongs to the realm of nature, not to that of spirit. Regeneration is supernatural in the sense of being due to the direct efficiency of God, but it is not miraculous. The operation of the Spirit upon our souls is moral and spiritual; it involves influences like those which one soul brings to bear upon another. The best analogy, though of course it falls far short of the truth, is that which is derived from the personal relations of men. There are changes of heart on the lower levels of life, which one soul brings to pass in another. What moral and spiritual transformations are thus wrought! How often we see a rough, uncultured man brought into an altogether new life by the influence of a refined and gentle wife! How often one friend will bring another, by influence and persuasions, to choices which change the whole tenor of his life and give character an utterly different direction! How is the change produced? By influences partly conscious and partly unconscious, but all moral, all consistent with freedom on both sides. Such are the influences of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. The change is brought about morally. It is beautifully described in the Assembly’s Catechism in the answer to the question, What is effectual calling? (effectual calling being here taken as equivalent to the Spirit’s work in regeneration). “Effectual calling is the work of God’s Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth *persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.*”

This brings us to the human side in the change of heart, namely, conversion, or, as it is often called in the New Testament, repentance. The change of heart is as truly man’s work as it is God’s work. From the nature of the case it must be; for if its central and essential element is a new choice, our own will must make it. But it is not

a work which man shares with God, in such a way that we may distribute it between God and man, saying, God did so much and man so much. It is truer to say that God did it all and man did it all. God did it all in that He furnished power and motive and influence ; it never could have come to pass without Him. The sinner did it all in that it was his own choice, like any other choice the outcome of his own will. Here at the highest point in man's moral and spiritual nature, in the highest exercise of the human will, God works through man without hindrance, to will and to do of His good pleasure. This is not a mere co-operation, or, as it is called in theology, synergism ; it is a realization of the divine will through the human will. Yet the human will is free in it. Conversion is not a natural process but a moral one. It is a choice and a free choice. The soul is not under the compulsion of the Holy Spirit. It is never freer than when it is making its supreme choice. It has power to the contrary and knows that it has. The divine grace is not irresistible although it is unresisted. It carries the will with it, but not apart from the will's free consent. I grant that there is a mystery here. So is there in every exercise of freedom. There is a mystery in the fact that I can change the whole tenor of my fellow's life, persuading him to make choices which involve an entire transformation of character in great spheres of life, and yet he remain free. But I will not throw away the freedom because it is encompassed with mysteries. A doctrine of invincible grace, which denied the true freedom of man in conversion, would land me in far greater mysteries.

There has been much controversy among theologians respecting the relation of the two elements in the change of heart, and also the relation of the change of heart to faith and justification. Which comes first, regeneration or conversion ? Does the change of heart precede faith and justification ? or do faith and justification come first

and the change of heart follow? I greatly doubt whether the controversy will ever be settled by the victory of either party. The process by which the soul passes out of its lost condition into the kingdom of God is complex; it is composed of a number of factors so united as to defy a complete analysis. It is so with all our moral and spiritual crises. Here is a young girl, careless, light-hearted, still a child in thought and act. She gives her heart to the man of her choice, and lo! all at once she is transformed into an earnest, thoughtful, devoted woman. All at once the stream that ran merrily along the surface has found deep channels, where it moves slowly and mirrors the heavens in its depths. Who shall analyze the change, distributing the factors and assigning them to their respective causes, in her will and the will of her lover? Who shall say which came first, faith or love? An attempt at such analysis would be absurd. It is not less absurd in the case of the great change, the new birth. This much indeed we may say, that God's activity comes first in time in the movements which precede the change; His Spirit moves upon the soul and draws it toward Christ. But when the change takes place, the divine and the human elements are united in one inseparable act. We may say that, logically, the regeneration is first, because the predominant agency is the Spirit, but we cannot say that it is first in time. The relation of the change of heart to faith and justification is equally incapable of analysis. Faith is one side of the change itself; or, we might say, the change involves faith and faith involves the change. So far as the will lays hold upon the divine grace, appropriating it, it is faith; so far as it makes choice of the supreme end, it is conversion. But who shall say that faith and conversion are two distinct acts of the will, however clearly they may be distinguished? The two are only formally different; they are different aspects of a single choice. Justification belongs to the

same complex ; it comes not before or after, but with the faith and the change of heart, the one indivisible change.

The result of the change of heart is a *new man*. The sinner is transformed into a child of God. The old sinful self is lost and a new self is found, a self which has its center and its life in God. Love is its principle. The kingdom of God has begun to come in the regenerate soul.

It is common to say that the change of heart is instantaneous, and there is a measure of truth in the statement. The distinction between a supreme choice of self and a supreme choice of God is a sharp one ; there seems to be no intermediate ground. We cannot serve God and Mammon (Matt. vi. 24). The sinner in his conversion makes a complete revolution. Nevertheless, we must somewhat modify the statement. In the first place, we must distinguish between the change and the consciousness of the change ; men are not always able to recognize the precise time and manner of the change. They may be able only to say with the blind man, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John ix. 25). In the second place, we must remember that the power of choice passes through a process of growth and development. The child reaches the full maturity of freedom only by a process. Now it is possible under Christian nurture to so guide the growing freedom of the child that there shall be a gradual growth into the fulness of the Christian life. In such cases conversion does not seem to be instantaneous. Doubtless there is a point somewhere, where the personal free will takes upon it the full responsibility of the supreme choice. But it seems not so much a crisis as an indistinguishable point in a continuous process. I do not say that such cases are numerous ; but they are likely to be increasingly numerous as the kingdom of God becomes more fully established and as the power of Christian nurture is more generally recognized and made use of.

II. Let us next look briefly at the more important factors of the new life.

First among these I place the union of the believer with Christ. This is established in justification and the new birth, and becomes a permanent element in the Christian life. It is a part of the kingly work of the Saviour, and essential to that complete salvation at which redemption aims. Christ, by his redemptive work, united himself with the human race, becoming its Head and Saviour. In justification this relation becomes a personal one, and in regeneration it becomes an internal spiritual relation. In the new life this union is the basis and source of the whole work of grace. The sinner has given himself up to the Saviour, and the latter abides and works in him through the Holy Spirit. The Master himself illustrated the nature of this union by the similitude of the vine and the branches (John xv. 1-10): "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (ver. 5). The apostles compare this union with the union between the husband and the wife (Eph. v. 31, 32); with that between the head and the members of the body (1 Cor. xii. 12); with that between a building and its foundation or corner-stone (Eph. ii. 20-22). The Christian is in Christ: "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). Christ dwells in the Christian: "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). The sanctification of the believer is a "forming of Christ" in him (Gal. iv. 19). This is a union of fellowship, communion, and love, in which the believer comes consciously into personal relations with Christ and the Father. Christ dwells in his heart by faith (Eph. iii. 17). He has that personal knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, which is life eternal (John xvii. 3). It is also a union of life. The Saviour's life is bestowed through the Spirit

upon the believer, strengthening and building him up in holiness and Christian manhood, and capacitating him for Christian service. It is a foretaste of that closer union which is to exist in the perfected kingdom of God.

A second factor in the new life, closely connected with the one just mentioned, is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells and works in the soul. In the new birth the Holy Spirit, who has access only to the outer court of the sinner's heart and moves upon it, so to speak, from without, enters the holy of holies, the sanctuary of the will. Henceforth that is His home, the place where He does His work. The Spirit is the agent of Christ in the process of the new life. His activity is partly revealed to the believer's consciousness: He bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom. viii. 16). It is partly below consciousness. It is to be noted, also, that the Spirit is not only the internal source of our spiritual life, but even of the redeemed physical life. The body is a temple of the Spirit, and the Spirit is the earnest of the resurrection (1 Cor. vi. 19; 2 Cor. v. 5).

A third factor in the Christian life is faith. In our theological investigations we are too apt to confine our consideration of faith to the beginnings of the Christian life, attending exclusively to what is called justifying faith. But faith is a permanent element of the new life. It is always the subjective condition of all its processes. Paul said, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). We may speak as truly of sanctification by faith as of justification by faith. The receptive attitude which faith involves is essential for the carrying out of all the divine work. It is thus that the inward righteousness, which is as truly a gift of God's grace as the so-called "imputed" righteousness, is appropriated. The faith of the Christian life is the faith which "work-

eth by love" (Gal. v. 6). Like justifying faith it is without merit, the hand that receives the divine largess.

The last of these factors which I will mention is the fellowship of Christians. The believer does not pursue his career alone. He is a member of a great organism, of which Christ is the Head and all Christians are members, the body of Christ (1 Cor. xii.). He is not merely a son of God, but a brother of all God's children. The kingdom of God is social as well as individual. No man liveth unto himself in it. The church is the body of believers, and every Christian is a member of the church, which is one and universal.

✠ III. Next let us look at the process of the new life, or sanctification. The Christian when he first enters the kingdom of God is still a sinner. He stands at the beginning of a long road. He has chosen God as his chief good and made the kingdom his chief end. But such a choice only slowly works out the results of the old sinful choices. There remains much land to be possessed. There is need of a complete salvation, which shall not leave any of the evil of sin unremoved. God makes no man perfectly holy by a miracle of grace. The work of reducing the conquered country of the believer's soul to harmony and order is gradual. The whole Christian life is a progressive dying unto sin and living unto righteousness. In this work God and the believer co-operate. The power comes from God, but the work is done by man. God works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure, and we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. ii. 12, 13). Were the Christian life what it ought to be, there would be perfect and loving harmony between God and the believer in the work. Both would pursue unwaveringly the same great end. As it is, in our feebleness and sin we only approximate to the ideal.

The doctrine of sanctification implies that the Christian is under the divine law. We saw, when considering the

doctrine of justification, that God's forgiveness is not an indulgence on the ground of which the believer may freely sin, but that it has for its object his holiness. When the apostles say that we are not under law but under grace, and speak of the law as abolished, they are referring to the meritorious ground of salvation. The believer, since he has been and is a sinner, can never claim eternal life as a reward. It will always be a matter of free grace. But this does not make the law less binding upon him as a rule of duty. On the contrary, it is even more binding, since now the hindrances in the way of its observance are removed and God's Spirit is given to supply the believer with moral power. Christianity gives no quarter to the antinomianism which would deliver the Christian from the restraints of the moral. It repudiates such a doctrine with holy horror. The Gospel is through and through ethical. I know that some will insist that we cannot maintain this ground unless we admit that good works are in some way instrumental in securing our salvation. They say, "If you teach that men are saved by God's grace alone and not by their good works, what motive can you give them to lead them to holiness? What use is there in obedience, since salvation is not dependent upon it?" But this objection arises from a wholly inadequate conception of the Christian system. The chief end of man is not to escape punishment and get into heaven; it is to fulfil the divine will in the redemptive kingdom. It is indeed true that good works can never be the meritorious ground of salvation, but they are an essential element in the salvation itself. The faith that would rest upon God's justifying grace and not manifest itself in good works is no true faith. Justification and regeneration mean sanctification as truly as the seed and the warm earth and the air and sunshine mean plant and blossom and fruit. No man can have the faith which secures forgiveness and the purpose which initiates the

new life and not have for his great aim and object the love and obedience which the law requires. Paul asks the question, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" And his answer is, "God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?" (Rom. vi. 1). He teaches precisely the same doctrine as that of James, which has so often been represented as contradicting his teachings. The latter says, "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? . . . Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself" (James ii. 14, 17). Good works do not merit salvation, but they are an essential element in the salvation itself. Faith alone justifies, but the faith that does not press on to love and good works is no faith at all, but dead, sham faith.

There is still one point at which the doctrine must be guarded. In saying that good works are not the meritorious ground of salvation, I do not mean to say that they are not meritorious. God approves them, and, if I understand the New Testament aright, He even rewards them. When a man has been placed by God upon a platform of grace, his good works have a real though relative value. They will never merit salvation; they are themselves the result not of the believer's unaided efforts, but of the Spirit of Christ working in him. But God views them with favor and grants rewards proportioned to them. Though all the redeemed will be saved solely on the ground of Christ's work, there seems good reason to believe that there will be differences of reward corresponding to the different degrees of obedience and faithfulness in this life.

Before leaving this branch of our subject, we must endeavor to answer the question, Whether complete sanctification is ever attained in the present life? On the one side there are those who confidently assert that every Christian can, if he will, reach this state, and that there

are multitudes of Christians who have already reached it. On the other side there are those who affirm, with equal confidence, not only that no man, save Christ alone, has ever attained perfection in this life, but that no man can do it. Now theoretically, as it seems to me, the perfectionists have a good case. There is no reason in the nature of things why the Christian should not reach a condition of perfect holiness in this life. Christ did so, and while the Christian starts at an immense disadvantage as compared with Christ, since he possesses innate tendencies to sin and sinful habits which are the result of his old sinful choices, yet he is free and has the aid of Christ's Spirit. I should be very loth to deny the possibility as an abstract possibility ; those who do so, it seems to me, inevitably weaken the sense of responsibility and abridge the guilt of sin.

But the question whether men have the abstract power to become perfect in this life is one thing, and the question whether any men do so is quite another. The latter, which is the practical question, must be answered by the appeal to facts as we find them in the Scripture and Christian experience. Now I deny that facts justify the assertion that believers become perfect in the present life. The Scripture gives no countenance to the view. There are indeed Bible characters who are called perfect, but as soon as we come to examine the facts, we find that the word is used relatively and not absolutely, to indicate their piety and not their sinlessness. The Bible records many sins committed by its perfect men. The Lord's Prayer is intended for all Christians, yet it would be inappropriate in the mouth of a sinless man. Paul declares himself not to have already obtained or already to have been made perfect, but only to be pressing toward the goal (Phil. iii. 12-14). James, writing to Christians, affirms that "in many things we all stumble" (James iii. 2). John, also writing to Christians and directly addressing them, sol-

emphatically avers, "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8). Christian experience in all ages testifies to the same fact. The most holy Christians, who have made the highest attainments in the Christian life, bewail their sins and are conscious of being far from perfect.

Those who hold the doctrine of perfection do so only at the price of a complete lowering of the conception of sin. Of course if we set our standard low, it is easy to attain it. The Pelagians, who make sin a light matter, have no trouble in being perfect. The Antinomians, who deny the obligation of the law so far as Christians are concerned, simply give sin another name and sin freely under the guise of holiness, and the Christian world has had only too sad reason to know what that kind of perfectionism means. As for our Methodist brethren—of whose piety and earnest purpose no one stands in doubt—they also lower the standard. The sinless perfection which they claim to attain is like Voltaire's Holy Roman Empire; it is neither sinless nor is it perfection. Wesley admits that perfect men commit "involuntary transgressions" of the law. Another prominent writer upon the subject quotes with approval, as describing the state of sinlessness which believers attain in this life, the phrase of Archbishop Leighton, "imperfect perfection" (Wheldon, "Doctrines of Methodism," Bibliotheca Sacra, vol. xix., p. 271). But what is an involuntary transgression of God's law? What is imperfect perfection? The first is a contradiction in terms and the second is no better. The best Christian *sins*—just that and nothing less; he does those things which he ought not to do, and leaves undone those things which he ought to do. His sin does not consist merely in the involuntary movings of his corrupt inherited nature or in the involuntary consequences of his old sins. He sins freely. That which fills with shame the soul of the best and holiest Christian in his moments

of self-examination—and most of all such a Christian—is not the frailty which he cannot help (of which there is indeed enough), but the sins which he could have helped and which, notwithstanding, he freely committed. If you ask me, Why, if he is free, does he not help it? I answer, That is the mystery of freedom, which I cannot solve. A free choice is an ultimate fact. But as I have said before, so let me say now—let not the mystery of freedom induce us to exchange it for the difficulties and absurdities of determinism. By God's grace the believer more and more dies unto sin and lives unto righteousness. The conquest comes not here, but on the other side of death.

IV. But the Christian's career on earth is not merely occupied with sanctification, it involves also his service in the kingdom of God. Every Christian has a vocation. His life is "a plan of God." He is elected for some particular work in the kingdom. We all recognize this fact in practice, but it is not sufficiently regarded in our theological discussions, while even in our preaching it is too often left out of view. Sanctification has to do with the formation of character. But character is not the be-all and the end-all in Christianity. It is not even the highest thing in the Christian life, apart from its effects. Character is a means to an end, and that end is service. We are to be sons of God in doing as well as in being. The effort of many Christians seems to be solely or chiefly directed toward the formation of character. But this may be, and often is, mere selfishness. Character has its great preciousness, but it is a preciousness that is revealed only in service. Heaven is not to be a mutual admiration society, where the redeemed will exhibit their characters to each other, as prize-fighters might show their thievs and muscles. God has put us into this universe to do His work. There is work to be done in this world, and work to be done in heaven. The Christian's work here is to

build up God's kingdom. This task has been committed to men, and every believer has a share in it. He is to employ in this service both his secular avocation and his religious opportunities. Each Christian has his own peculiar task. The twelfth chapter of Romans and the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians show what a strong hold this idea of service had upon the minds of the inspired leaders of the early church.

But I have time only to mention this subject, though it is most inviting and suggestive. We must pass now to our last topic, namely,

V. Christian perseverance.

The Bible seems to teach, and Christian experience to confirm, the doctrine that God enables all true believers to persevere unto the end. The Saviour says of his sheep, "They shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, which hath given them unto me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John x. 28, 29). Paul expresses his confidence that He who began a good work in the Christian will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. i. 6). In the eighth chapter of Romans the Christian is represented as bound to God by a chain which reaches from eternity to eternity, and it is declared that nothing can separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus his Lord. Peter tells us that Christians are guarded by the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. i. 5). Jude's epistle ends with a doxology unto "him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy" (Jude 24). It is true that there is a condition to this divine grace. It is promised only to those who continue in faith and in the use of the means of grace. God does not grant his salvation in any external way. He saves men through their own wills, not apart from them, and by

the use of prayer and the other means of grace. But the assurance seems to be that the true Christian, who has that genuine faith which receives God's grace and presses on toward love and obedience and holiness, will not be permitted to fall. God will hold fast to him and protect him from his enemies, as well as from his own sinful nature.

It is true that there are some passages in the New Testament which seem to teach the possibility of falling from God's grace (Luke xiv. 34 ; John xv. 4-6 ; 1 Cor. ix. 27 ; Heb. vi. 4-6 ; x. 26 ; 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21). But these are either intended to guard Christians against self-confidence or to show the danger of those who have mistaken an imperfect religious experience for genuine faith. The awful warnings of the passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews are addressed to Christians in danger of apostatizing, and were meant to show that they could look for no salvation outside of Christianity. They are passages which the opponents of the doctrine of perseverance, who base their doctrine upon the freedom of the will, never dare to use, for they would prove too much for their purpose.

The chief objections urged against the doctrine of perseverance are that it militates against the freedom of man and that it tends to beget a false security on the part of Christians. With regard to the first, it is to be observed that human freedom has its full exercise in the supreme choice of faith and conversion, which becomes the permanent choice of the Christian life. It is only through this choice, and not apart from it, that God brings the believer to the final blessedness. That God should insure to the man who has freely put himself into the divine hands, and keeps himself there, the attainment of the chief end at which he aims, is conservative of freedom and not subversive of it. The other objection is equally inapplicable. The doctrine of perseverance implies a real faith on the

part of the Christian, but such a faith is inconsistent with a false security. The doctrine is indeed dangerous to those who have no real faith, but only think that they have; but so is the whole scheme of divine grace dangerous to them, and the objection could be urged quite as strongly against the doctrine of justification. To the genuine Christian it must always be a ground of infinite joy and satisfaction that the almighty arms are round about him and that they will never let him go.

This leads me to say, in conclusion, a word respecting Christian assurance. This grace is rather a privilege than an essential element of the Christian life. Yet it is a privilege which every child of God may enjoy. The Spirit bears witness with the believer's spirit that he is the son of God. On the basis of this inward witness he may have a comfortable assurance. He may know that he is forgiven, that the Father smiles upon him, that Christ is his and that he is Christ's, and that he is an heir of the eternal inheritance. This assurance of faith is of inestimable value. It may include a well-grounded assurance of hope, which reacheth forth to that which is within the veil. As the experience of faith goes on, and the communion of the believer with the Father and Christ through the Holy Spirit becomes more and more intimate, and as the fruit of the Spirit is increasingly manifested in the life—the love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, of which Paul speaks (Gal. v. 22)—the assurance should become stronger and more invincible. It does so in normal Christian experience. There are exceptions and they show that such assurance is not vitally essential. But doubtless the highest and best work for Christ is done only by those who possess it. The Christian who does not have it will do well to pray and strive that he may obtain it.

XXVI.

THE OTHER LIFE

WE come now to eschatology, the doctrine of the last things. To us mortals this is an "undiscovered country," except so far as revelation has thrown light upon the subject. Steadily we all—to use a phrase of Carlyle's—are "marching forward into the mists of the future tense." But how ignorant we are of what lies before us! The history of the world in the ages that are to come after we have passed from the stage is hidden from us; the experience of the past and the knowledge of the causes now at work enable us to do little more than make a few shrewd guesses respecting what is to come. Of that other world of the future, from which we are separated only by a breath and a pulse-throb, we know still less.

It becomes us therefore to approach these subjects with the recognition of our limitations and our dependence upon him who is the Light of men. Christ knows more concerning these things than we. If we have had personal experience of his reality and power in the forgiveness of sins and the new life, we shall do well to take him as our guide when we enter this dark region. Many things must be inexplicable to us, for at the best we shall see as in a mirror darkly. But though heaven and earth pass away, his words shall not pass away. He is the Truth. He has the words of eternal life. We show the highest wisdom when we take his teachings and those of his inspired apostles in their plain simple meaning with childlike confidence. It is folly, and worse than folly—if we truly accept Christ

as our Master—to turn and twist his words that we may put our own meaning upon them. What do we know upon these subjects? How far will the little rushlight of our reason throw its rays into the profound darkness of the last things? Can we not trust God? Have we no faith in His love and righteousness? Let us be patient. Let us take Christ's doctrine as we find it. Let us avoid all dogmatism while dealing with these solemn themes—the dogmatism of too positive denial, as well as the dogmatism of too positive assertion. Let us be charitable and tolerant toward those who, though as loyal as we to Christ, come to conclusions differing from ours.

The subject which I wish to treat in the present chapter is the other life. First, we will look at the proof of the existence of the other life and then at the nature of it. In discussing the latter point I shall confine myself to what is called the intermediate state, or the period between death and the resurrection.

I. We consider, first, the fact of the other life. This is denied by materialists of all kinds, philosophical, scientific, religious. The man who will not admit the existence of a soul, distinct and separable from the body, is compelled to take this position. The struggle between religion and materialism is therefore *à l'outrance*. We cannot here go into the philosophical refutation of materialism. It would carry us far beyond the limits which we have thus far observed. But I cannot be content to deal with the subject of the other life merely as a doctrine of revealed theology. It is one of the great fundamental religious truths upon which natural theology also has its decided word to say.

1. I take up the rational proof of immortality. First, however, let us understand the fact to be proved; it is not the existence of an *endless* life beyond the grave but of a continued life. The question we have to answer is, Does death end all? The other question, Does the

soul exist forever? reason cannot answer; revelation alone can tell us. Let us also understand the limitations of the rational proof for immortality. Reason can give us no absolute proof of the life beyond. It lies outside of experience; no man—save he who died and rose again—has ever crossed the dead-line and returned to reveal its mysteries. The doctrine of immortality cannot, like the doctrine of God, be verified in conscious experience. What the rational argument for the other life can do is to show us that all the presumptions of nature point toward it, so that the burden of proof lies upon him who would deny it. The most reason can claim is that there is the highest probability that the soul continues to exist after death. But even this is much. Even the Christian cannot do without it.

The first argument is drawn from the religious consciousness of man. The belief in immortality is universal. The soul instinctively assumes the existence of a life beyond the grave. The facts of the world produce this impression. Philosophy may deny it, but the simple, unsophisticated judgment of men in all ages and all nations demands it. It is not an occasional or accidental belief, but asserts itself as a necessity of human thought. From the rude animism of the black African up to the high reasonings of Plato's *Phaedo*, the common faith is manifested in every conceivable form. It is one of the strands in the threefold cord which binds the souls of all men together, the truths which Kant represents as postulates of the practical reason—God, duty, immortality. Now such a universal belief cannot be a mere imagination. Man's constitution cannot so deceive him in a matter of such tremendous importance. Such a universal and necessary subjective conviction must have a corresponding objective reality.

We come next to the so-called metaphysical argument, advanced in ancient times by Plato and urged with great

force during the last century by Bishop Butler. As the argument used to be presented, it started from the assumption of the essential simplicity of the soul. Modern psychology has led us somewhat to modify the form, while we preserve the substance, of the proof. We no longer claim the absolute simplicity of the soul, but we still affirm that there is such simplicity connected with it, namely, in personality or self-consciousness. The self, or "I," is the most perfect unity of which we have any knowledge. It abides through all our experience absolutely one and the same. It has no elements which we can distinguish, even in thought, but is the permanent, always identical, indivisible subject of all our thoughts and acts. Now the great physical law of the conservation of matter and energy forbids the thought of annihilation. What we call destruction in the case of material things means merely dissolution and change. We burn a stick of wood on our hearth and it disappears, but the chemist shows us that not a particle has been lost. The ashes, the smoke, the carbonic dioxide, contain the wood in another form. What is death? We see one side of it, the dissolution of the body. The dust returns to the earth as it was. There is no annihilation, but a compound body is reduced to its original elements. Our bodies during life are in a state of unstable equilibrium, material particles and forces held together by that mysterious co-ordinating power which we call life for lack of a better name. Life ceases and the elements fall asunder like the particles of the desert sand-pillar when the revolving wind subsides. But the self-conscious, self-determining "I" is not thus compound and unstable; so far as we know it, it is absolutely one and simple. What becomes of it? Is there no law of conservation in the sphere of spirit? Have we any right to assume that it is annihilated? Do not the analogies and presumptions of nature point the other way? I grant that the materialist will not admit the force of this reason-

ing; to him personality is an illusion. But for all others I claim that the argument, rightly used, has great weight. It is not demonstrative, but it affords a reasonable probability. It shuts the mouth of the adversary. If he admits the existence of the self-conscious "I," he cannot present any rational grounds for the denial of its survival of death. Butler, arguing from the simplicity of the soul, was obliged to concede that his argument would prove the immortality of animals; but if we confine ourselves to man's personality, no such conclusion can be drawn; the animal is conscious, but not self-conscious; sentient, but not personal.

A third argument is the teleological, based upon the evidence of a final cause in man. Men exhibit in their constitution and development a far-reaching purpose. The powers of man are in worth and capability far beyond anything else in nature. Man is the microcosm. All the highest elements of the universe are concentrated in him. He is the one being in the world that has the power to understand the world and to make it subservient to himself. Eternity is in his heart (Eccles. iii. 11). He discovers and apprehends the infinite. He is a progressive being; there is no limit to his capacity for development. Now we judge a being's final cause from its powers and capacities. Viewed in this light how high is the purpose which man seems created to subserve! How great are the ends which he is fitted to accomplish! And yet no man attains his end in this world. Scarcely has he reached the maturity of his powers and begun his work when disease lays him low and death cuts him off. The broken shaft is the emblem of human life. We all leave our task unfinished. With infinite pains we fit ourselves for our work, we train our powers to the most perfect use, and then we have to stop. We step out upon the stage and receive the plaudits of the audience, and just as we are beginning to play, the curtain falls. Can we believe

that this is all? Is there such waste in the universe? Are all of these powers and capacities for nothing? When a flower in our gardens here in the North comes only to the bud before the frosts of autumn wither it, we infer that it was made to bloom in a warmer and more favored clime. Shall we not reason in the same way with regard to ourselves? Must there not be another life, for which this is a preparation? Is not that the reasonable inference? In physical science we regard that hypothesis as nearest the truth which best correlates and explains the facts. Does not the hypothesis of immortality best explain the facts of human life, and is it not reasonable to accept it as true?

Once more, we draw an argument from the moral sphere. Deep seated in the human soul is the sense of justice. The law which conscience declares, and which is at work in the world about us, is the law of righteous retribution. Goodness deserves happiness; sin deserves suffering. There is a fixed connection between right and blessedness, between wrong and pain. But this connection is not maintained in this life. The good suffer; the wicked prosper. There are anomalies that are incapable of explanation if we look only at this life. The Lisbon earthquake, with the untold sufferings which it entailed upon good and evil alike, shakes the faith of multitudes in God. Successful villany carries away all the prizes of life, and men ask, "Can there be a God in heaven?" But the difficulties disappear if we suppose this life to be only the vestibule to the other life. We can understand how in a state of probation and education a state of things may be temporarily allowed, which would not be permanently justifiable. Assume the reality of immortality and all is clear.

Finally, there is a religious argument. This brings us to the outward edge of natural theology and finds its full application only in the light of revelation. Man was

made for God and His kingdom. He alone, of all the beings in the world, is a religious being. He alone has communion with God and knows himself to be made for God. He consciously finds his chief good in God, and knows that the divine love rests upon him. But a being that is thus related to God cannot be a creature of a day. He must be made for a higher life than that of the beasts which perish. The lower orders are mere means to an end that lies beyond them. But man, made in God's image and fitted for communion with Him, is in a true sense an end in himself. There must therefore be a higher life in which man will live with God. The life of communion with Him here must find its fruition in the eternal life.

Upon these arguments the believer in immortality bases his conviction. He claims that, while the proofs do not amount to a demonstration, which from the nature of the case is impossible, they furnish in their cumulative power an irrefutable presumption in favor of immortality and render the rejection of the other life unreasonable.

2. But let us examine the teachings of the Bible respecting the subject we are considering.

We shall misunderstand the Old Testament doctrine of the other life, if we see it solely through the medium of our modern Christian modes of thought. We distinguish between this life and the other life. Not so the Hebrews; their antithesis was between life and death. The Old Testament begins with a doctrine of death. According to the first chapters of Genesis, it is not natural to man, but has come into the world as the punishment of sin. It is natural for the animal to die, but man is not an animal. What is death? It is not the mere act of dying, but the state into which men enter when they die; and this state is the opposite of life. By life the Hebrew meant man's bodily existence on earth, with all that it implies, its strength and health and vigor of mind and body,

its possessions, its work, its joys, its fellowship with men and God. By death he meant the cessation of bodily existence, the loss of life's possessions and joys, the termination of its labors, the relinquishment of its friendships and its communion with God. There are those who assert that the Old Testament does not recognize the continuance of the soul after death, and that the word death, as used by the Old Testament writers, is synonymous with cessation of existence. But nothing could be farther from the truth. The immortality of the soul is everywhere taken for granted, while in not a few instances it is distinctly asserted. The translation of Enoch and Elijah implies it. When it is said of the dead that they "have gone to their fathers," or have been "gathered to their fathers," and this is distinguished from their burial, there is a clear intimation of continued existence (Gen. xxv. 8; xxxv. 29; xlix. 29, 33). The prohibition of necromancy in the Jewish law, and the story of Saul's experience with the witch of Endor, show what was the prevalent view of the Hebrew people. Sheol, or the underworld, is the state and place of the dead, in which they are represented as still leading a conscious existence. When the king of Babylon dies, the inhabitants of Sheol are moved at his coming; they come to meet him and address him (Is. xiv. 9-20). But while the Old Testament represents death as a state of continued conscious existence, it is true to its fundamental doctrine that it is the punishment of sin. It is the opposite of life with its blessedness. Sheol is a place of darkness, of silence, of forgetfulness, of separation from God's revelations (Job x. 21, 22; Psalm xciv. 17; cxv. 17; lxxxviii. 5; Is. xxxviii. 11). The work of life has ceased, and all are at rest (Job iii. 13-19). The inhabitants of Sheol are called shades, the "weak or languid," in distinction from men in this world in the vigor of their life and activity. The righteous and the wicked alike go to it. While it is not represented as a

place of suffering, neither is it represented as a place of blessedness. Death was regarded as the great evil, life as the great blessing. All men must die sooner or later; but to live long with the enjoyment of God's favor was the especial reward of righteousness, to die an early or violent death under the visitation of the divine wrath was the especial punishment of sin. "That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Ex. xx. 12) was the promise to those who feared God. "That soul shall be cut off from among his people" (Ex. xxxi. 14) was the threat to the evil-doer.

It would be a mistake to regard this Old Testament conception of the existence beyond the grave as given by revelation. The work of revelation with respect to the subject was negative rather than positive. The Hebrews were left to their natural knowledge of the other world, the action of revelation being confined to restraining them from the false and pernicious views which were prevalent among their heathen neighbors. It was only as time went on and the divine education of the Jewish religious consciousness progressed, that the revealing Spirit granted to a few of the prophets and inspired men glimpses of something better in store for the righteous, and a punishment for the wicked which did not end with the grave, sufficient only to relieve the awful pressure which rested upon thoughtful and pious minds in view of the inequalities of this life and the common doom of death. Job catches a glimpse of a life in the vision of God after the earthly life of suffering and contumely is over: "But I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the last upon the earth; and after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet without my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job xix. 25-27). The inspired Psalmists have a presentiment that the righteous shall be delivered from Sheol, and that God's favor and life shall be manifested

in the midst of death: "Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; in thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 10, 11. Cf. Ps. xvii. 15; xlix. 15; lxxiii. 23-26. See Delitzsch, "Ueber die Psalmen"). This hope is enlarged into the prophecy of the resurrection (Is. xxvi. 19), and the doctrine of rewards and punishments in the other world (Dan. xii. 2 seq.; Is. lxvi. 24).

The question is asked, why the Old Testament does not give a fuller and clearer doctrine of the other life. The answer is not altogether easy, yet we can see some of the reasons. In the heathen religions with which Israel was surrounded, and which were continually seducing the Chosen People from their allegiance to Jehovah, the doctrine of the other world was associated with the worst errors and abuses. That these errors might be avoided it was needful that the emphasis should be placed upon other things. The great lessons which revelation had to teach under the Old Dispensation related to the present life. They were that the highest good of man is to be found in the favor and love of God, a lesson to be learned now and here in the presence of the living Jehovah; and that God's kingdom is to be established in this world. When these truths had become the religious property of mankind, then the curtain might be lifted and the other world be revealed in its continuity with this. For the moral and spiritual destiny of man is to be worked out in the present life; the ways we choose here we follow there. To-day the order is the same; first we must learn that the chief end of man is to be realized in the love and service of God; then we are ready to understand the meaning of the life beyond.

The obscurity, which is so remarkable a feature of the Old Testament teachings respecting the subject before

us, disappears when we come to the New Testament. Christ has "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. i. 10), that is, the incorruptible or immortal life. But let us not misunderstand: Christ and the apostles do not devote their strength to the preaching of immortality, in the sense of a continued existence of the soul after death. This they always took for granted, except in cases like that referred to in Luke xx. 37, when the truth had to be defended against the materialists of the time, the Sadducees, who believed neither in angel nor spirit (Acts xxiii. 8). Like the Old Testament writers, they taught that death is the common doom. The new element in the Saviour's teaching, which gives the New Testament doctrine a character so entirely different from that of the Old, was along the line of the truth that

" 'Tis not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die."

Jesus gave a new and deeper meaning to the words life and death. He re-emphasized the truth, of which the old Testament saints and inspired men had not obscure glimpses, that what makes the present life alone worth living is the favor of God, and that what alone makes death worth fearing is His displeasure. But he went further and revealed the truth, of which, as we have seen, the Old Testament saints had only a dim presentiment, that the life which begins here in the favor of God is an eternal and incorruptible life, which persists beyond the grave and turns the darkness of death into light and glory. "This is life eternal," he said, "that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John xvii. 3). It is the spiritual life which begins in the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God and is nourished and developed in the communion and service of the kingdom; it is the life grounded

in Christ's work and flowing from his person. Whoever has this life does indeed die, but death is not death to him; it is swallowed up in life. And the spiritual, working outward to the material through God's ineffable power, communicates its blessed life to the body, so that although it returns to the earth as it was, yet it is restored through the resurrection. Of all this the Saviour's own resurrection is the proof.

On the other hand, Christ reveals a new significance in death. Death is the universal doom of sin. But as it is transformed into blessedness by the eternal life which comes to the believer through Christ, so it is turned into a personal doom and darkened and intensified in the case of those who resist the divine offers of mercy. "The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56). According to the Saviour's teaching, there is a spiritual death, beginning here in the soul's separation from God, which works itself out in the sufferings of the other world.

II. We have now to consider the nature of the other life. Our guide here will be the Bible. Unassisted human reason throws little or no light upon the character and ongoings of the world beyond the grave.

Revelation distinguishes two great stages in the history of the other world, separated from each other by the second coming of Christ, the resurrection and the last judgment. The first is called by theologians the "intermediate state;" the second is the final state, which reaches on into the endless eternity. It is with the first of these stages that we have to do at the present time. It is to be noted, before we enter upon the further discussion of the subject, that the New Testament passes somewhat lightly over the intermediate state. The emphasis of the Bible is laid upon the present life, the time of the great decisions, and the consummation of the kingdom at the return of Christ in glory. It was upon this latter event, together with the resurrection and the judgment and the eternal

state beyond, that the thoughts and hopes of the early church were fixed, rather than on the state after death. Nevertheless, though the references of Christ and the apostles to the intermediate state are few, they are explicit and sufficient to give us all needful knowledge.

The state after death, according to the New Testament, is one of conscious existence. This would seem to go without saying, considering the fact that it is taught even in the Old Testament. There are, however, those who deny it, basing their view upon the literal interpretation of certain Bible words. Many of the advocates of the doctrine of conditional immortality—of which I shall speak more fully when we come to the subject of retribution—claim that man is non-existent during the period between death and the resurrection. According to these religious materialists, the soul cannot exist apart from the body, and they insist that the word death, wherever it is used in the Bible, signifies cessation of existence. Others, like Archbishop Whately, following a similar line of reasoning and giving a literal interpretation to the word sleep when used in the Bible with respect to the dead, declare that the soul at death enters into a state of slumber and thus waits in unconsciousness the coming of the Saviour and the resurrection of the dead. But the assertion that the soul cannot consciously exist without the body is wholly without rational foundation, since we have no experience of such a state and therefore no basis for any conclusions respecting it. And apart from this consideration, the New Testament decidedly contradicts these views. When the Saviour says that “all live—or are living—unto God,” he uses language incompatible with the idea of non-existence or unconscious existence (Luke xx. 38). When he declared, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad,” he meant, according to the only satisfactory interpretation of his words, that Abraham in the conscious life of the other world had

knowledge of the incarnation and earthly life of the Messiah (John viii. 56). The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus most distinctly asserts a state of conscious existence for both the righteous and the wicked (Luke xvi. 19-31). This parable clearly refers to the state after death and before the judgment. To say that because it is a parable it is not to be taken as evidence upon such a point, is unworthy trifling. A parable is not a fable, but a story of real events, such as are constantly happening. If Christ did not intend the narrative to be taken as true in all its essential details, he concealed his purpose in a way of which we have no other instance recorded in the gospels. There may never have been a real Dives or a real Lazarus, but we cannot doubt that Christ meant to describe a real scene in the other world, such as might happen with any Dives or Lazarus. The dying Saviour's words to the thief on the cross, "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43) lose all significance unless they referred to conscious existence; the shifts to which the advocates of the theories to which I have alluded have been compelled to resort to avoid the clear meaning of these words throw a most instructive light upon the whole subject. If the Saviour's promise to his disciples that he would prepare a place for them in his Father's house had reference to the state after death and not to the final state, it adds additional weight to the view which I have advocated. Paul's description of the state after death, as "at home with the Lord," and "with Christ," which is "very far better" (2 Cor. v. 8; Phil. i. 23), loses all its point if any different construction be put upon it.

Finally, in those portions of the Apocalypse which relate to the intermediate state, the redeemed are represented as praising God and the Lamb in the full exercise of all their conscious powers (Rev. iv. 4 seq.; vi. 9; vii. 9 seq.; xiv. 1-5; xv. 2-4; xvi. 7; xix. 1 seq.). I know it will be said that the Apocalypse is a mysterious book, full of symbols

and figures, and therefore not to be taken into account in the consideration of a subject so important as that which we are examining. But I cannot agree with those who assert that the one book in the Bible which bears the name of a "revelation" is a sealed book which reveals nothing. I know that there are depths of prophetic truth in it which the plummet of the ordinary interpreter cannot fathom, but it is, notwithstanding, a plain book written for plain people. Its symbols are transparent and not opaque. They are windows through which we see—far-off, it is true, and transcendent—the realities of the other world. I regard it not as of less value with respect to a subject like that with which we are engaged, but rather of more value than those books of the Bible which are concerned chiefly with God's kingdom on earth.

The New Testament reveals to us in large but clear outlines the condition of the departed. We have not all the details we could wish, but it is not hard to fill in the picture. So far as the physical conditions are concerned, the earthly body is left behind and the resurrection body has not been given. It is accordingly common to describe the spirits in the other world as disembodied during the intermediate state. This view is favored by the language of Paul, who, contemplating the possibility of dying before the second coming of Christ, speaks of the condition into which he would enter as a being "naked," a being "unclothed," a being "absent from the body" (2 Cor. v. 3, 4, 8). In Hebrews xii. 24 the blessed dead are called "the *spirits* of just men made perfect," and John tells of the "souls of them that had been slain for the word of God" crying for vengeance (Rev. vi. 9, 10). Nevertheless, while the earthly body is absent and the resurrection body has not yet been bestowed, it is not impossible that the dead possess some organism through which they can act upon, and be acted upon, by the material world. We know too little of the nature of the spirit to speak dogma-

tically upon a point so imperfectly treated in the Bible. Whatever the case may be, we need not have the slightest doubt that the blessed spirits recognize each other and communicate with each other, as well as with the higher intelligences. It is amazing how much doubt has been thrown upon the question of recognition in the other world. It ought never to have been an open question at all. It would take a direct revelation to make me believe that God would permit a state of things so pitiable and contrary to all that we know of His character as non-recognition would imply. And I would draw the same conclusion respecting the activities of the other world. Doubtless the departed ones, "whether in the body or out of the body," hear the "unspeakable words" (2 Cor. xii. 3, 4) and engage in the active and glorious service of the life beyond.

But where are the dead? This a question which has its difficulties and which all do not answer alike. Somewhere the departed must be. Those who talk of states rather than places in the other world use language which may have meaning to themselves but which conveys none to my mind. God, the infinite Spirit, who existed before He created time and space, may be conceived as existing in a purely spiritual state, though since the universe has been created He has also a local relation, as we strive to show by means of the doctrine of His omnipresence. But I cannot conceive of the finite spirit as unlocalized. Certainly the Bible never so represents it. But what and where the places are, is a different question. According to the Old Testament all the dead are in Sheol. The Sheol of the Old Testament becomes the Hades of the New. But it is a remarkable fact that in the New Testament the term Hades is never used with reference to the state or abode of the righteous. It has been asserted that the parable of Dives and Lazarus is an exception, and that both the good man and the bad man are said to be in

Hades ; but what it does say is, that the rich man "in Hades lifted up his eyes . . . and seeth Abraham afar off" (Luke xvi. 23) ; it does not say that Abraham and Lazarus were there. On the contrary, the place which is called "Abraham's bosom" seems to be entirely distinct, as it is certainly separated from the place where Dives is by a great and impassable gulf. And whatever may be the truth respecting this particular passage, the other teachings of the New Testament respecting the blessed dead seem to place them in heaven, the abode of the holy angels and the region in the universe where God manifests His highest glory. The "Paradise" where Christ promised the penitent thief that he should be with him on the day of the crucifixion is, according to Paul, synonymous with the third heaven (2 Cor. xii. 4), and is identified by John with the same blessed place (Rev. ii. 7). Paul looks forward to the other world as being with Christ (2 Cor. v. 1-10 ; Phil. i. 20-26). But everywhere in the New Testament Christ is represented as being in heaven since the ascension (*e. g.*, Phil. iii. 20). The passages in the Apocalypse which have already been quoted as showing the conscious existence of the dead represent the redeemed as in the presence of God and the Lamb in heaven.

In view of these facts it seems strange that so many theologians should insist that the pious dead do not enter heaven until after the judgment. The common doctrine of the unlearned Christian, that the souls of believers go at death immediately into heaven seems to have the Bible upon its side. If now we ask how this fact is compatible with the Old Testament teachings, according to which righteous and wicked alike enter Sheol or Hades at death, two explanations are possible. The first is that furnished by the Roman Catholic doctrine of the so-called *Limbus Patrum*, which is held in substance by many Lutheran theologians, according to which the pious dead

of the Old Dispensation were in a temporary abode in Hades—the Limbo of the fathers—until the death of the Saviour, who upon his descent into Hades released them and secured for them admission into heaven. According to this view there has been a change in the other world, corresponding to the changes brought about in this world by Christ's redemptive work. The other view, which on the whole affords a simpler and more satisfactory explanation is, that the word Sheol or Hades is a general term designating the state and place of the dead, but expressive rather of Jewish ideas than of revealed truth. Revelation, throwing its light upon the other world, shows that the righteous dead are not, and never have been, in the general state and abode of the dead, but through Christ's conquest over death have been brought into the blessedness of heaven. The word Hades is accordingly employed in the New Testament to designate the state of the dead so far as it has not been affected by redemption. When the shadow of the divine displeasure rested upon the whole realm of death, as was the case in the Old Testament, before the higher revelation had been given, all were said to be in Hades. But when Christ had lifted the curtain, it was seen that only those who have rejected God's mercy are really there. If this view be correct, the change in the use of the word Hades would correspond very nearly to that which has taken place in the use of the word death. As the righteous in Christ are delivered from death, so they are delivered from Hades, and the Saviour is rightly said to have "the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev. i. 18).

We pass to the consideration of the mental and spiritual condition of the dead. The redeemed are, as we have seen, with Christ. This is the same as saying that they are in a state of happiness. Christ is the center of heaven. He is the spring of living waters from whom all blessings flow. To be in communion with him, and

through him with the Father, is eternal life, and in the other world all the hindrances which mar and obscure this communion are removed. The beatified believer sees no more as through a glass darkly, but face to face. He knows no longer in part, but even as also he has been known (1 Cor. xiii. 12). In having Christ he has all things. Moreover, he is in the company of the blessed angels and of the redeemed. Doubtless the earthly ties of love and friendship, which were for a time broken by death, are here reknit. Nor shall we doubt that heaven is a place of activity and service. It is indeed represented as a rest (Heb. iv. 9; Rev. xiv. 13). But rest is a relative term. The redeemed may rest from their earthly toils and cares and troubles, and yet engage in the most active pursuits of a higher order. The law of continuity cannot be so broken that those whose life found its fullest satisfaction in service here should be without service there. There are passages in the Bible which appear to intimate that the saints above, who certainly make one communion with the saints below, are cognizant of the events transpiring in the world they have left behind. The "great cloud of witnesses" look on upon the race run by the earthly contestants for the prize of God's high calling (Heb. xii. 1). The Apocalypse represents the souls in glory as eagerly watching the progress of God's judgments on earth and the struggles and triumphs of the church militant. Christians here below have come, we are told, "to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. xii. 23). If the angels are "ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation" (Heb. i. 14), is it too much to conjecture that our blessed dead who have gone forth from us are permitted to hover about us and to minister, under Christ's guidance, to our needs? Christianity gives no sanction to the doctrines of spiritualism; it maintains the Old Testament law against necromancy; it recognizes the fact that God,

for wise reasons, does not allow us to hold converse with those who have gone before; but it does not shut us off from the comfortable and inspiring hope and assurance that the redeemed, who loved us so much while we were still together in the flesh, are often near us and are assisting Christ in his high task of making all things work together for good to those who love God.

Of the condition of the unblessed in the intermediate state we can speak less clearly. Revelation only partially lifts the veil upon their meagre existence. Our Saviour's profound parable, to which allusion has so often been made, represents the rich man as in suffering—a suffering of soul which the material symbols employed do not require us to interpret as physical—as separated by an impassable abyss from the blessedness of the redeemed, yet as knowing of their happiness. The lost souls are in Hades, not in the Gehenna, where they are to be after the judgment. They are under the dominion of death, with the consciousness of God's displeasure resting upon them. This is the real death. The Hebrews under the Old Dispensation conceived of all, good and bad alike, entering the dark and attenuated existence of Sheol or Hades. The New Testament, while teaching that the righteous are made conquerors over death in heaven, leaves the unrighteous in Hades, under the power of death, while the wrath of God abideth upon them.

Abraham in the parable says to Dives, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed"—that is, firmly established—"that they which would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us" (Luke xvi. 26). How much are these words intended to mean? Do they imply that the condition of all souls in the intermediate state is fixed? or are they consistent with the possibility of new decisions? Is the probation of any classes extended into the intermediate state? I must confess that this passage seems to me to make the

probability of such an extended probation very small. Yet who would deny this possibility, if the Word of God permits its maintenance, and if it is consistent with the general teachings of revelation? I have said in another connection that I cannot regard this hope, especially as it is held with regard to the heathen, as the pernicious doctrine which it seems to many. If there are any souls that have not heard God's message of love in this life, and have had no opportunity to make the great decision of life, we may be sure that God will either give them a probation in the other world, or save them without a probation. But I have already given the reasons why it seems to me more probable that God gives all men sufficient opportunities in the present life to make the great decision than that He prolongs the period of probation. And if in any instance He does not do so—as I think must be the fact in the case of all persons dying in infancy, and perhaps in the case of some older persons—then I see no reason why they should have any probation at all. A probation is not a right which we can claim from God as a matter of debt. It is not such an inestimable privilege that God is bound in justice to give it to all beings. It does not seem to me that there is any evidence in the Bible of an extension of probation into the intermediate state. We have, it is true, the two "Peter passages" (1 Pet. iii. 18–22; iv. 6). But even supposing that the first of these—upon which the interpretation of the other is dependent—refers to a preaching by Christ in Hades after his death, and not, as is asserted by some competent commentators, to a preaching through his Spirit in the days of Noah, still only a single class, the antediluvians, is mentioned, and that a class which had already had an opportunity in the present life through the faithful teachings of Noah, whom Peter in his Second Epistle (ii. 5) calls "a preacher of righteousness." That a new opportunity was given to these "spirits in prison" is not said, and it is far too sweeping a conclusion

when, on the ground of this obscure passage, the assertion is made that a probation is granted in the other life to classes which are not even mentioned here. It is also a significant fact that there is no hint in the New Testament of such a mixed state as this theory would require. Probation implies a choice made in the midst of mingled good and evil influences ; but the New Testament reveals to us only the two conditions, with their appropriate localities, the one of certain salvation, where all the influences are holy, the other of irremediable separation from God and the good. Between the two the "great gulf is fixed."

I would not speak too positively upon this subject. God knows that I would welcome any larger hope for those who have fallen short of God's purpose concerning them, not only for the heathen and others who have never heard of Christ through the preached Gospel, but also for those who have heard of him and have rejected him. I should rejoice to have all men saved. But the question for me is not what I should like, but what God likes. I know very little. God knows all about it. The question with me, therefore, is, How much hope God's Word justifies me in cherishing and in preaching to my fellow-men. Better the silence of faith, than a too eager effort to justify God's ways to men. I am sure that God is love and righteousness, and sure that He condemns no man who has not had ample opportunity to accept His grace. I *think*, judging from all the intimations I can find in the Bible, that God gives every soul possessed of mature moral capacity such an opportunity in the present life. It seems to me reasonable to believe that any souls which have no such opportunity for any reason—as in the case of those dying in infancy or of older persons who have not attained their full moral stature—are saved without a probation. I see no need of assuming an extension of probation into the intermediate state, and no scriptural warrant for it. But I would infinitely rather accept such a theory, with all its difficulties,

than believe that God wronged a single soul. My sympathies are with the advocates of the doctrine of extended probation when the contest is between them and those who teach that souls are lost—whether few or many—without having had the opportunity to accept God's grace.

But if we do not accept the doctrine of extended probation, we must suppose that there is such a thing as education and development, perhaps discipline and purification, in the other life. Multitudes of souls go out of the world—it seems reasonable to believe—in a salvable state yet altogether unfit for the highest blessedness. A third of the human race die in infancy before the moral powers are developed. The best Christians are imperfect and sinful when they die.

But I must pause, before I enter upon this part of our subject, to anticipate the objection that I am about to advocate a view tantamount to the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. Purgatory is neither continued probation nor is it the education of souls in heaven. It is a place and state of suffering and expiation for those who, while certain of salvation, have not made that complete satisfaction for their post-baptismal sins which the Roman system requires. According to the Roman Catholic doctrine every sin committed after baptism must be punished either in this life or the other. Purgatory is the place where the residuum of punishment is inflicted. The length of the soul's stay in this place of suffering may be shortened by the prayers of the faithful on earth, the intercession of the saints, and especially by the sacrifice of the mass. The suffering—which only according to a part of the Catholic theologians is by literal fire—is mitigated by the certainty of heaven and of God's ultimate favor and love. The majority of Christians have to pass through purgatory. It is a place entirely distinct from heaven and the abode of the lost, and it is a place of punishment.

Now in assuming that there is education and discipline

for souls that are certain of salvation, we differ from the doctrine of purgatory in every essential point but one. The one point is the certainty of salvation. The points of difference are, first, that we suppose all these souls to be in heaven, not in a different state and place; and secondly, that we deny their subjection to punishment, affirming that they are in the full light of God's love and favor. What we assume is, that heaven is a school, in which, under the gracious tutelage of God and Christ and the holy angels, and such redeemed souls as have attained a higher stage of spiritual development, the weak, sinful, imperfect souls—the great multitude of children, the heathen, be they many or few, who are salvable, the vast numbers born in Christian lands who have professed Christ, but have had a wholly imperfect Christian experience, all, in a word, who stand on the lower rounds of the spiritual ladder—are disciplined and trained for that fullness of blessedness and service which God has in store for His children. Nor would I altogether exclude from this school of Christ any human follower of his, since none of those who die have attained or become perfect. Viewed in this way heaven, during the intermediate state, is a place of growth. It is a busy, active place, where the hindrances of the earthly life are no longer present and the progress is steady and glorious.

But, it is asked, Does not this imply that there is sin in heaven? In reply I would say that, to my mind, there is nothing incongruous in the thought that such sin as would be compatible with a state where all were striving to attain the great end of their being, sin of mere infirmity and frailty and imperfect development, should temporarily exist there. But I do not feel at all sure that this is the case. I cannot agree with those who think that death has no influence upon character. It is a great and radical crisis to those who are introduced by it into heaven. Let the soul be separated from the earthly body, with the temptations

and impulses to sin inherent in it, and let it be brought into a perfectly holy environment, let it have the vision of Christ, and supposing the supreme choice of the soul—as we must assume it—to be for the good, I am not sure that such a soul will not in a way entirely accordant with its freedom be delivered from sin, while only its imperfection and immaturity will be left. It may be that the immemorial Protestant belief upon this point is right, and that there is a real truth in the words of the Assembly's Catechism, that "the souls of believers are, at their death, made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory." Of course such perfection must be relative and not absolute; there must be something negative about it. But may not the holiness which the perfectionists claim as attained in this life be actually attained, through the joint action of the regenerate will and the holy environment, under the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, after the "body of this death" has been laid aside and the sinful environment of earth left behind? I can conceive of even a heathen, in whom there was already the germ of a holy choice, thus turned in an instant from positive evil and made the docile and humble pupil in Christ's school.

Yet on this whole subject I would speak modestly, remembering how little revelation has made known to us on the subject and how incompetent we are to speculate upon it. In any case, the school of Christ must do its work. The Christian who has made the highest attainments here will find himself a mere learner there, while multitudes will have to learn the very A B C of the heavenly knowledge and begin at the lowest stage of the heavenly discipline and development. But what blessed work it will be for Teacher and scholars, all seeking the one great end and animated by the same holy spirit. There the Saviour's principle will find its perfect illustration, that the greatest shall be the minister and the first shall be the bond-servant (Mat. xx. 26, 27). What

opportunities there will be there for those who have been taken from this world in the fulness of their powers and capacity for service in God's kingdom ! They may be the assistants of the great Teacher. There Eliot and Brainard may have found the souls of their Red Indians, and Moffat and Livingstone the souls of their dearly loved Africans. There some who have been snatched away just as their ministry for Christ was beginning on earth may find a higher ministry, which will engage to the full their best powers and give scope to all the attainments they made below.

But someone will say, " You reject the doctrine of extended probation because it is not taught in the Scripture, but you put in its place speculations about education and development about which the Scripture is equally silent. Are you not inconsistent ? " I think that there is no inconsistency here, though I freely admit, as I have done before, that what has been said is largely speculation. The question is, between the two speculations which, on the whole, is the most in accordance with the general principles of Scripture and the suggestions of the Christian consciousness ? This question each must answer for himself, or, if he will, refuse to answer it and maintain the silence of faith. Thank God, Christians can differ upon this point and still be loyal Christians, humbly submissive to the teachings of revelation. Let every man be persuaded in his own mind ; let every man be tolerant of the speculations of others, remembering the ignorance. One thing we all know, that God is love, and on that knowledge we must all rest, like the trusting child on its mother's bosom.

Finally, let us remember that the intermediate state—as the name implies—is not the final state. It is provisional and expectant. In comparison with what is to be, it is an imperfect state. Even the blessed ones in heaven have not been perfected. God has better things in store for them.

XXVII.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

THERE is a marked difference between the attitude of Christians to-day and that of the early church toward the great subjects of eschatology. Our thoughts are concerned chiefly with the life after death and the condition of individuals in it—where the departed are, whether they are conscious, whether they are in the company of those who have gone before, what their activities are, how much knowledge they have about this world and how much communication with it, whether there is probation or development in the other world. The early Christians, under the fresh impulse of Christ's teachings and those of his inspired apostles, turned their thoughts chiefly to the earthly future of God's kingdom, and especially to that great crisis by which the present order of things is to be brought to a close and the eternal order established. It was but seldom, if we can judge from the New Testament, that they raised any questions respecting the state after death, and then only that they might be sure that those who died in the Lord before the great consummation would be kept in happy communion with the Saviour and brought with him at his second coming to take part in the solemn scenes of the last day, and share in the glory and blessedness of the final and eternal state. Their thought was not so much of the individual as of the church and of the kingdom.

We need to put the emphasis where it was placed by the first Christians. In order that this should be done, it

is not needful that we should lay less stress than we do upon the condition of the individual in the intermediate state, but that we should recognize the fact that the intermediate state is a temporary and subordinate order of things and must give way to a higher order, and that the goal toward which human history, and the history, if we may call it such, of the unseen world of the life beyond are alike tending, is the eternal state which is to be ushered in by the last day. In this point of burning light the two lines, the one from below and the other from above, find their meeting-point.

The importance of this readjustment of emphasis is apparent as soon as we consider the subject. Christianity is a historical religion. The kingdom of God is a development. It is to come by a process and to come on this earth. This planet, so scarred and seared by sin, is to be redeemed. The earth is to be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea (Hab. ii. 14). The chief end of Christ's redemptive work and of our labor for the kingdom is not—as we have had occasion more than once to observe—to get men safe out of this world into the blessedness of the other, important though this is, and necessary as a means to the great end; rather it is to bring the whole earth itself under the sway of the Lord and His Christ. Then, and then only, can the eternal order of things begin. "The world for God and Christ!" is the true battle-cry of Christendom. We find the right relation of things indicated in the Apocalypse, where all heaven, the angels and the redeemed, are represented as eagerly watching and even taking part in the struggle of the militant church. Our longings, our hopes should reach forward along the line of the earthly history of the kingdom to the triumph which is to begin with the last day. It may seem as if in this way of looking at it the individual becomes of no importance and the whole stress is laid upon the general, upon the race,

and the church. But this is only seeming. The truth is that the individual is to find his consummation only in connection with the general; the triumph of the believer takes place only in and through the triumph of Christ and the church. Until the final glory is revealed and the body of Christ is perfected there is imperfection in the state of every individual believer, whether in this world or the other. The social principle, which plays so important a part at every stage in the development of humanity, finds its complete realization in the glory of the triumphant church of the future, the Bride of Christ. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews said, speaking of the relation of the Old Testament saints to the Christian church, "These all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Heb. xi. 39, 40). Similar language might be used with reference to the relation of the individual Christian to the church; the promise, the better thing, the perfecting, belongs to the whole, and to the individual only in connection with the whole. There is no selfish individualism in the kingdom of God.

I shall speak in this chapter of the "day of the Lord," the great crisis which ushers in the final state. I shall first consider the principles upon which the New Testament prophecies respecting this subject are to be interpreted, next point out the course of the history of the kingdom leading up to the last day, including the subject of the Millennium, and then take up the three great events of the day itself, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection, and the last judgment.

I. It is of great importance that we should know how to interpret the New Testament prophecies respecting the last day. At the best there is in every prediction, so long as it is unfulfilled, an insoluble element. But if wrong

principles of interpretation are applied to it, the whole prediction becomes worse than insoluble ; it is absolutely misleading. Prophecy is a species of revelation. It aims to make known important truth, needful for the guidance of God's children. It must always be a great misfortune to miss the truth it is intended to teach.

There is a large body of New Testament prophecy relating to the subject before us ; indeed all New Testament prophecy is either directly or indirectly connected with it. Christ was constantly referring to the last day and its events in his public teachings, as well as in his more private conversations with his disciples. He made it the subject of one of his most extended discourses, namely, that recorded in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew and the parallel passages in Mark and Luke. It is a theme which continually recurs in the apostolic epistles. It is the chief subject of the Apocalypse.

Now there seems to be an unconquerable dualism, not to say self-contradiction, in these predictions. Our Saviour connects his second coming now with the destruction of Jerusalem, now with the end of human history. The last judgment is solemnly predicted as to come at the end of the world, but it is also declared that it will come during the lifetime of some of the disciples (Matt. xiii. 24-30, 36-43 ; x. 23 ; xvi. 27, 28). In the great eschatological discourse in Matthew (chaps. xxiv., xxv.), and parallel passages in Mark and Luke, both the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world are evidently alluded to, but no exegesis has yet succeeded in separating the two, although innumerable attempts have been made. The confusion is made greater by the assurance of the Saviour that "of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father only" (Matt. xxiv. 36 ; Mark xiii. 32). The apostles connect the last day and its solemn scenes exclusively with the end of the world, but they evidently expect its advent during

their own lifetime (Phil. i. 6, iv. 5; 2 Cor. v. 1-10; 1 Thess. iv. 15; Heb. x. 25; 1 Pet. i. 5, iv. 7; James v. 8; 1 John ii. 18). In the Revelation the time is represented as at hand, the coming of Christ as in the immediate future (Rev. i. 1, 3, 7, xxii. 6, 7, 12, 20); and is connected with the downfall of the persecuting Roman and Jewish powers. But at the same time it teaches that before the resurrection, final judgment, and end of the world, there is to be a thousand years of rest, during which Satan will be bound.

It is not strange that the facts, standing just as they are, have led to many widely diverse conclusions. Unbelievers have triumphantly pointed to the discrepancy as an undeniable proof of the fallibility of so-called revelation. Many believing scholars have tried to refer everything to the far-off end of the world. A class of theologians now somewhat extensively represented, though not generally recognized as orthodox, have insisted that the last day was the end of the Jewish dispensation, that Christ's coming was not so much a coming as a presence—a view which receives a color of plausibility from the fact that the Greek word translated coming, *parousia*, literally means a presence—and was his spiritual presence in the world since his ascension. According to this view, there is no future general resurrection and judgment, but resurrection is the clothing of the soul at death with a spiritual body, while the only judgment is the so-called particular judgment which takes place when the soul enters the other world. The future of the kingdom of God is thus left outside the view of prophecy.

The difficulty disappears when we apply the right principles of interpretation. Fortunately those principles are to be found in the Bible itself. The Old Testament predictions are in large measure fulfilled in the events of the New Testament, and we are able to gather from the comparison of prediction and fulfilment the divinely estab-

lished relation between the two. Now we find that the larger number of the prophecies are not the predictions of single future events, so that they are—to use a phrase that has been frequently employed—history before the event. Rather the prophecy deals with the pragmatism of history, the relation of its causes to its effect. It reveals a principle or law or agency gradually working out its result. Thus the prophecy of the redemptive work of Christ is the revelation of the consummation of the divine principle of redemption already working in the world. The prophecy of the Messiah looks to the complete fulfilment of the personal mediatorial principle, which appears in operation in the earliest stages of the redemptive revelation. It is thus that persons and events connected with the process of working out these principles become types of the persons and events in which the principles culminate. The redemption of God's people from Egypt is a type of the spiritual redemption through Christ. Canaan is a type of heaven. The judgments of God upon the heathen nations and Israel are types of the last judgment. The one great cause, God's redemptive providence, following a certain method or law, gives rise to all these events and unites them together. So the prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Dispensation are types of Christ, since they all manifest the working of the same redemptive principle which found its complete realization and embodiment in him.

Now prophecy does not always, or even commonly, reach directly across the course of history and lay hold upon the last things. It is wont to open up something of the course that history is to follow, and to find a resting-place, before it goes on to the goal, in some comparatively near though partial fulfilment of the principle it is concerned with. Thus to a great extent prophecy is typical; it has a primary, but partial fulfilment in the type, and this very partiality points on to the complete

fulfilment in the antitype. It has, to use the happy phrase of Lord Bacon, "springing and germinant accomplishment." The second Psalm has its primary accomplishment in some monarch of the Davidic line, who is a type of the Messiah; but he only very partially and meagrely satisfies the conditions of the prediction, and the unfulfilled remainder carries our thoughts on to the complete fulfilment in the great Son of David. The prophets are continually predicting the great redemption of Israel, and the prediction finds a typical and partial fulfilment in the deliverance of Israel from the impending danger or restoration from the existing captivity, but only that the great deliverance of the future may appear the more distinctly. There thus arises what has been sometimes called "the perspective of prophecy;" events widely separated from each other but connected by a common principle, and so typical and antitypical are represented in a single view, with no clear line of demarcation between them and no indication of the long periods of time which separate them. It is as when we see before us what seems to be a single range of mountains, but which turns out as we advance to be several ranges widely separated from each other. In this way the two advents of Christ are represented in the Old Testament as one, and it was impossible until the Christ came to discover that ages lay between the two; but the two stand in the closest pragmatic relation, and the first coming is the type of the second. So the Old Testament fails to distinguish between the founding of the Messiah's kingdom, which took place in and through the Christ of the humiliation, and the consummation of the kingdom with which the present order of things is to terminate.

Such is the nature of Old Testament prophecy, and there is no reason to believe that the prophecies of the New Testament essentially differ in their character. In many cases, it is true, there are direct predictions of the

last things, but in many other cases the final fulfilment is mediated by a near and partial fulfilment, which is typical of the final. There is also commonly the same disregard of the intervening time.

Now the event which our Saviour chose as the type of the last day, and as the partial realization and the illustration of his redemption in its aspects both of mercy and judgment, was the overthrow of the Hebrew commonwealth, and more particularly the event in which this overthrow was consummated, the destruction of Jerusalem. This was to the Jew the solemn and formal termination of the Old Dispensation, with its ceremonial law and its theocratic institutions. It was a true "end of the age" (*συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*), namely, of the age of the Old Covenant, and a type of the end of the world-age. The disciples, brought up as Jews and taught from their childhood to accept literally the Old Testament teachings respecting the perpetuity of the law and the nation, could scarcely have been more surprised at the end of the world than at this ending of the Old Dispensation. The coming of the Christ in power to bring about this result was well fitted to be a type of the final personal and outward coming in glory to bring in the final triumph of the kingdom. The judgment involved in it was the type of the last judgment. It is not saying too much even to intimate that the resurrection of the Christian cause, cast down by the oppression of Jewish persecution, was the type of the resurrection of the dead on the last day.

Accordingly, the Saviour portrayed on one canvas the two series of events, making no clear distinction between them. In the foreground was the impending overthrow of Judaism and the destruction of Jerusalem; gleaming forth behind it, in solemn and awful grandeur, was the last day, with its attendant events of the Saviour's coming, the resurrection, the judgment, and the end of the world-age. The ages of intervening time did not appear. To

those who first gazed upon the picture the whole seemed to be a single group of events. Only as time went on, and the first series of events transpired, did it become evident how much lay still beyond. The world in its history must reach the summit of the nearer ridge before it could be known that the peaks, which seemed to rise immediately behind, were far away. But when the first resting-place was reached, it was intended to be a pledge and assurance that the goal would be attained in due time. The same mighty power that brought about the redemption of the church by the overthrow of Judaism would surely bring about the redemption of the end, with its judgments and its glorious consummation.

We have seen that the Saviour himself confessed his ignorance of the day and hour of his second coming. The reason is not far to seek. There is always a conditional element in prophecy. God's redemption is wrought out through the agency of men. It is certain of accomplishment. But the speed with which the process will advance depends upon the faithfulness and zeal of the human instruments. When we pray to-day, "Thy kingdom come," and beseech the Lord not to delay His advent, we are prone to forget that we can do much to hasten the consummation. Now God through His omniscience compasses even the results of human freedom, and has given a place to them in His eternal decree. The Father's foreknowledge is cognizant of the day and the hour. But it was hidden from the God-man in his state of humiliation, since it was conditioned upon human freedom. How much he knew we cannot tell. But we must accept his own assurance that he did not know all. It may be that if the mass of the Jewish people had accepted Christ, the end of the old Judaism and the end of the world would have been synchronous.

The state of things being such, we cannot wonder that even inspired apostles did not fully understand the Savi-

our's prophecies. They saw what was near, and judged that the end was near. If Christ distinctly disavowed a knowledge of the times and seasons, we need not be surprised that the disciples knew even less than the Master. They had the principle in their possession, but were able only partially to apply it. We greatly misapprehend the nature of prophecy when we say that the apostles were mistaken in their expectation of the speedy coming of the last day. There is a nearness in days and years, and there is a nearness in the relation of cause and effect. In the first sense the last day was not near. In the latter sense it was; the causes which were certainly to bring about the end were already visible working; a great crisis was approaching, which was at once *an* end and the beginning of *the* end. In the Apocalypse we see the history of the kingdom advancing; the overthrow of the persecuting Jewish and heathen powers was immediately impending, and the inspired apostle, as he reached the summit of the first mountain range, beheld the view opening beyond, the thousand years of Christian progress, and on the other side the lofty heights of the consummation.

II. Our next topic is the course of events leading up to the last day. Let us take up the more important of these events in succession.

1. First among them we may mention the overthrow of the persecuting Jewish and Roman powers, to which allusion has just been made. Besides our Saviour's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, the first nineteen chapters of the Apocalypse are devoted to these events, which were to give the divine seal of approbation to the cause of the Crucified, and which are represented as engaging the supreme interest of the blessed ones in heaven. The destruction of Jerusalem and the surrender of the haughty Roman power, in the person of Constantine, to Christ were the two events which signalized the fulfilment of these predictions.

2. Next let us consider the progress of the kingdom. Our Saviour dealt with this subject somewhat fully in his parables of the kingdom. The growth of the wheat, of the grain of mustard-seed and the great tree which proceeds from it, the spread of the leaven in the meal, are the figures by which he illustrated and predicted the history of his cause in the world (Matt. xiii. 24-33). The work was to go steadily forward until the whole earth with all its peoples and institutions should be brought under the sway of Christ.

This brings us to speak of the Millennium. Probably many Christians would be surprised to be told that this much-discussed period is mentioned only once in the Bible; but this is the fact. There are, it is true, many passages, both in the Old and the New Testaments, which predict a time when Christianity will attain a general prevalence; some of them refer to the beginnings, some to the consummation of the Christian Dispensation, some are wholly indefinite (Is. xi. 6-9, xxxv., lx., lxxv. 20; Zech. ix. 9, 10, xii. 10; Mic. iv. 1-4; Matt. xiii. 31, 32; Luke xix. 11 seq.). But it is only in the twentieth of the Revelation (vv. 1-10) that the period of a thousand years, or Millennium is referred to. The passage is as follows (Rev. Vers.):

“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished; after this he must be loosed for a little time.

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon

their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

“And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

It would, of course, be impossible in this chapter to give a full explanation of this difficult and disputed passage. I can only briefly speak of the theories which have arisen from the different interpretations of it.

The first of these is the doctrine of the Premillennial Coming of Christ. This was widely held in the early Christian church, especially by the sect of the Montanists, who through their excesses brought it into disrepute. It was revived by the Anabaptists in the days of the Reformation, and is held at the present time by the Second Adventists and by not a few excellent men in our evangelical denominations. The fundamental belief of the Premillenarians is that Christ is to return at some time in the near future and establish an outward and glorious kingdom on earth. At his coming the saints are to be raised from the dead and share with him in the government of the world. The seat of this kingdom is to be the holy city, Jerusalem. During this period the Jews are to be

converted and brought back to their own land. The greater part of the inhabitants of the earth are also to be converted and the time is to be one of universal peace and blessedness. It is to last a thousand years, at the close of which period the powers of evil are to be let loose for a time and to unite in one final assault upon the saints and the holy city, but are to be destroyed by the power of Christ. Then will come the second resurrection, namely, of the wicked, to be followed by the last judgment and the final awards.

I do not mean to say that the theory is held in precisely this form by all its advocates, but only that this is a fairly representative statement of it. The doctrine undoubtedly has in its favor the literal interpretation of the passage in question, but it involves elements nowhere else presented in the Bible. The double resurrection seems excluded by the teachings of our Saviour and the apostles, and they nowhere intimate that so long a period is to intervene between the Saviour's coming and the judgment; on the contrary, they group these events together as parts of the last day. Moreover, the fanaticism and excess which have been associated with this view have created among sober Christian thinkers a well-founded prejudice against it. In saying this, I mean nothing to the detriment of the very excellent men who favor it to a greater or less extent.

The other view, which has been commonly held in the Christian church, is that the Millennium is a period preceding the second coming of Christ during which Christianity is generally to prevail and the principles of the Gospel to be recognized. It is not a period of precisely a thousand years, but one of indefinite duration—the number one thousand, the cube of ten, being the symbol of perfection, and designating the period as one of great prosperity and blessedness. During this time Christ is to reign, not in visible personal presence but through the

Holy Spirit and the common methods of the kingdom. This view abandons the strictly literal interpretation of Rev. xx. 1-10, and recognizes the fact that there is a figurative and symbolical element in the prophecy, corresponding to the general character of the book in which it occurs. The binding of Satan indicates the suppression of evil and the general prevalence of the principles of the Gospel during the millennial period. The first resurrection (in full accordance with Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14, which the apostle most probably had in mind) is to be understood as referring to the revival on earth of the cause and spirit of the martyrs (or perhaps to a raising of the souls of the martyrs to a place of especial dignity and authority in the heavenly world), while only the second resurrection is to be understood as a physical one. This interpretation is not without its difficulties, but they are far fewer and less embarrassing than those which arise if the other view be adopted.

It is common among those who hold the view just referred to to regard the millennium as still in the future. But there are not a few reasons why the theory of Augustine ("De Civ. Dei." lib. xx., c. 9) commends itself, that the thousand years is the period of the success and prevalence of Christianity, and has been in progress since the conclusion of the days of persecution. This is a time during which Satan is, relatively speaking, bound, and the cause of the martyrs, which is the cause of Christ, triumphant. If it be objected that such a view deprives us of the Millennium altogether in the sense in which the term has been immemorially understood in the church, my answer is, that it only antedates the beginning of it, while we may still hope that there is in store for us before the Master's coming such a time of universal Christianity as the church has been wont to expect. The kingdom of God is to go steadily on its way, not indeed without great convulsions and even retrogressions, but still, on the whole,

with unhindered progress, until he come whose right the kingdom is.

3. There are a number of passages in the New Testament which lead us to conclude that at some time before the second coming of Christ, and opening the way for it, there is to be a grand final massing of the powers of evil, perhaps connected with a temporary release of the supernatural powers of evil, under a personal head called the Antichrist. This is to result in a short and terrible conflict, issuing in the utter overthrow of these enemies of Christ. Of this final struggle the efforts of the persecuting Jewish and Roman powers against the early church are the type and the prophecy. The first great personal type was the Emperor Nero. (See 2 Thess. ii. 3 seq; 1 John ii. 18, 22, iv. 3; 2 John 7; Matt. xxiv. 24; 1 Tim. iv. 1; Rev. chaps. xiv.-xvi., xx. 7-10.) Since the Reformation Protestants have been accustomed to identify the Papacy with the Antichrist. The Westminster Confession of Faith expressly calls the Pope by this name. But the most that can be said is, that the Papacy, so far as it has persecuted the true church, is a type of Antichrist. The complete fulfilment of the prophecy is still to come. The Roman Catholic religion, great as are its errors, is not anti-Christian.

4. The conversion of the heathen is another of the great facts of prophecy. It is taught in the Old Testament and also in the New. Our Saviour gave to the church the commission to go into all the world and make disciples of all the nations, to preach the Gospel to every creature, with the assurance that all authority had been given to him on earth and in heaven, and the promise that he would be with his followers even to the end of the world-age (Matt. xxviii. 18-20; Mark xvi. 15, 16; Luke xxiv. 47-49). He declared that this commission should be fulfilled (Matt. xxiv. 14; Mark xiii. 10; Acts i. 8). The Christian church has therefore from the first been a mis-

sionary church. Its work is to carry forward the work of the kingdom until the whole earth has been brought under the Saviour's sway. The result is finally to be reached, through the power of God working by means of human instrumentalities. The fulness of the Gentiles is to be brought into the kingdom.

5. Nor are God's chosen people to be forever cast off. This is distinctly taught in the eleventh chapter of Romans. "The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance" (ver. 29). "A hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved" (vv. 25, 26). So much is implied in the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies. We are not indeed to understand, as many do, that the Jews are to be restored to their political power. That would be opposed to the spiritual character of the kingdom of God. What is promised is that the Jews shall be brought back once more into the divine favor, and receive the salvation which they have for the time being thrust from them. The wonderful fact of history is the preservation of the Jews amid all the vicissitudes which have befallen them, and we cannot doubt that it points to the fulfilment of the Scripture promises.

III. We come now to the events of the last day, and first of all we consider the great event which ushers in the day, namely, the second coming of Christ. This is the great fact toward which the whole New Testament looks, the object of the disciples' longings; it is the consummation of the long historical process of redemption, the final act in the establishment of the kingdom. It appears on the far-off edge of the Old Testament prophetic horizon, not clearly distinguishable from the first advent, and is foretold in the predictions of the coming of Jehovah at the last day for judgment and redemption (Is. xiii. 6-14; Amos v. 18-20; Joel ii. 29-32, iii. 14-21; Zeph. i. 14, ii. 3; Zech. xiv. 1-9; Mal. iii. 2-18, iv. 1-3). Only in

one remarkable passage is the coming of the Son of Man distinctly foretold (Dan. vii. 13).

We have seen that the time was left wholly indefinite, hidden even from Christ himself, and so far unknown to the disciples that they seem to have supposed that the final coming was to take place during their generation. It was an event always impending, the causes of which were actively working and might at any time bring about the result. The great characteristic of the coming, constantly reiterated by Christ and the apostles, was its suddenness and unexpectedness, as in the case of its type the destruction of Jerusalem. "Be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh" (Luke xii. 40). "As the lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall the Son of Man be in his day" (Luke xvii. 24). The coming was to be like the coming of the flood, like the breaking in of a thief at night (Matt. xxiv. 36-44). The apostles echo the Lord's words, "as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. v. 2 seq.; 2 Pet. iii. 10).

The Saviour is to come in his kingly glory. Before the coming he is hidden from the eye of sense. His own disciples walk by faith, not by sight. The world does not see him, and men of the world throw doubt upon his existence, and ask, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. iii. 4). The coming is to be the outward personal manifestation of the glorified Christ, his "revelation" or "manifestation," his *apocalypse* or *epiphany* (1 Cor. i. 7; 1 Tim. vi. 14; Tit. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 7, 8). Then every eye shall see him, not as he was in his state of humiliation, but in the glory of his Father. According to the prophecy in Daniel he is to come in the clouds of heaven (Dan. vii. 13), that is, with divine glory (Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64). The angels are to be his attendants and their herald trumpets are to announce his advent (Matt. xvi. 27, xxiv. 31).

His coming is to bring the present order of things to a close, to bring about the consummation of his kingdom. It will not be a merely temporary coming, followed by a return, as in the case of the first advent, but a true "parousia," a coming to stay; for thenceforth the Christ will be always with his people, and the New Jerusalem shall come down from God out of heaven. But it will not be to found an outward political kingdom as the Premillennarians teach. The reign of Christ will be a spiritual reign, in the hearts of his people. There will no longer be that discrepancy between the ideal and real kingdoms, which now prevails, but the dominion of Christ will be realized in all its fulness in the midst of a redeemed and holy race.

1. The last day is not an ordinary day, but one of those "days of the Lord," which follow another standard of time from that to which we are accustomed, one day being as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day (2 Pet. iii. 8). It is an epoch rather than a definite time, like the days of creation, and the day of Sabbath rest which has followed the completion of God's works. Accordingly, in considering the events of the last day, we should do well not to bind ourselves too closely to the ideas of time which the word day in its ordinary use suggests.

2. The second of the events connected with the great epoch of consummation is the resurrection of the dead. There are hints of this truth in the Old Testament (indirectly in Ezek. xxxvii. 12-14; Hos. vi. 2, xiii. 14; and directly in Isaiah xxvi. 19; Dan. xii. 2). It is referred to in the Apocrypha (2 Mac. vii. 9, 11, 14, 23, 29, 36), and it was commonly accepted by the Jews at the time of Christ, it being the tenet by which the sect of the Pharisees was distinguished from the Sadducees, the materialists of the time who denied the future life (Josephus, "Ant.," xviii. i. 3, 4; "Bel. Jud.," ii. viii. 14). Our Saviour did not therefore announce the doctrine as a new one, but

rather confirmed it and gave it a new meaning through its relation to himself. He declared that he, as the Messiah, had the authority and the power to call the dead from their graves at the last day. In proof of this power he performed the most wonderful of all the miracles, the restoration of the dead to life, in the case of the ruler's daughter, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus (Matt. ix. 18, 19, 23-25; Luke vii. 12-15; John xi. 11-44). In the last instance he declared, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John xi. 25), representing himself as the power and the source of the resurrection. The great proof of his power to raise the dead was given in his own resurrection.

The apostles follow close in the track of the Saviour's teachings. Paul especially, as was natural from his Pharisæical origin and training, gave a large place to the doctrine in his preaching and epistles. In the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians he gave the subject a formal exposition, bringing it into direct connection with the resurrection of Christ as the great proof and pledge of the resurrection of believers. Both Christ and the apostles teach that the resurrection is a future simultaneous event, to take place on the last day. They never represent it, as some modern interpreters would fain make them do, as the rising of the soul at death into a spiritual body. Let us look more carefully at the great doctrine.

The resurrection is man's deliverance from the power of death, his physical redemption. We have seen that man was made to be a unity of soul and body; both are essential to the complete man. Sin has severed this connection through death. Death is not natural to man, but the consequence and punishment of sin. Even believers, although death is turned into life through the power of Christ's redemption, and they pass when they die into the heavenly blessedness, are under the sway of death in this respect, that they are separated from the body. Even if they should have some temporary organism in the intermediate

state, it is not the earthly body. But in the resurrection death is destroyed, the great physical enemy of man is overcome; death is swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. xv. 26, 54). From this time forward man is himself once more in all the fulness of his essential being.

The doctrine of the resurrection not only recognizes the fact that the body is essential to complete manhood, but it also maintains the preciousness and dignity of the body. The view is widely prevalent that the body is a clog to man's spirit, and that it will be a blessing to be freed from it. This was the doctrine of the Platonic philosophy, and is connected with the notion that matter is essentially evil. Christianity takes a different view altogether. Matter is good because God made it. The body is sacred. It partakes of the divine image. Christ sanctified the body when he became flesh and took to himself "a true body" as well as "a reasonable soul." Under the influence of redemption the body becomes a "temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. vi. 19). It is indeed, in the present state, marred by sin and made subject to death. It is a "body of humiliation" (Phil. iii. 21), a "corruptible body" (1 Cor. xv. 42), a "mortal body" (Rom. viii. 11). It must die and decay, returning to the earth as it was. But there is still in it the germ of a higher life. It will yet attain its ideal. During the present life the presence of Christ's Spirit in the believer is the "earnest" of this coming physical redemption (2 Cor. v. 5). We lay away our dead in the grave, and our hearts are full of pain that the precious body should be treated thus. It is a pain which all the thoughts of the blessedness of the soul in heaven cannot remove. This is the face we loved to look upon. These closed eyes a little while ago looked the full light of love into ours. These lips spoke the words that made our hearts thrill, and met ours in warm kisses. These hands clasped ours and labored for us with devoted affection. These feet went to and fro on our errands. What bodily

aptitudes and dexterities go down here into the silent dust! What training of years went to make this body the delicate instrument it was! How these fingers used to fly over the keys of the piano! Is this all? Is the body thrown away like a cast-off garment? Must it be forever hidden from our sight? Christ answers, No, a thousand times, No! This dust is precious. Nothing of what we prized will be lost. Every power, every capability, every possibility, will be preserved. The body, in spite of the appearance which shakes our faith, is not dead but sleeps, sleeps in Jesus. The grave is its quiet bed, where it awaits the last trump. It is "united to Christ," and he is able to keep that which is committed to his charge until the last day. The loved one who has gone from us is not only a far-off soul in heaven but will be reunited with the body which was so dear to us, and which we have laid away "in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ."

In order to hold this most precious and comforting doctrine, it is not needful that we should enter into those unprofitable speculations which have so often been indulged in concerning the identity of the present body and that of the resurrection. Undoubtedly there will be an identity, for otherwise we could not call it in any true sense a resurrection. But this identity may be consistent with great differences. It is not the material particles which constitute the oneness of the body during the different periods of the earthly existence, but the inward life and the outward form. Paul answers with great particularity and clearness the questions which arise upon this subject (1 Cor. xv. 35-58). He rebukes the doubt which asks, "How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?" He employs the same analogy, in explanation of the relation of the two bodies, which our Saviour used with reference to his death (John xii. 24), namely, that of the seed and the wheat which springs

from it. The two are related to each other as one kind of animal body to another, or as the heavenly luminaries. Whereas the present body is corruptible, dishonorable, and weak, the resurrection body will be incorruptible, honorable, and strong. The present body is a natural or psychical body adapted to a state of existence in which the lower or psychical principle of our nature prevails, a life of eating and drinking and sleeping and marrying and money-getting, and the like. The resurrection body will be a spiritual body, that is, not composed of some tenuous spiritual substance, as some would interpret (for it is to be a body, not a spirit, material, not immaterial), but a body adapted to a state in which the spirit, the higher, religious principle in man will have the predominance, a life of perfect communion with God and Christ and holy beings, in which eating and drinking will be subordinate, in which there will be neither marrying nor giving in marriage, but likeness to the angels (Matt. xxii. 30). Paul further explains the difference between the two bodies by showing their relation to Adam and Christ, the one the natural, the other the spiritual, head of mankind. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is of heaven. . . . And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Elsewhere the apostle tells us that Christ "shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself" (Phil. iii. 21).

By the resurrection, the completion of redemption, man will be brought into his right relations on the physical side to God and the universe. The body was made that it might be, as we have seen, the temple of the divine indwelling and the organ of communication between man and God. The resurrection body will bring the redeemed into a fellowship and union with God, which in this life

when the body is corrupted by sin, and in the intermediate state with its absolutely or relatively disembodied condition, are impossible. The vision of God will then have a new meaning, and the personal relation to Christ the Godman will also have a new closeness and intimacy. I do not dare to speculate upon a point of which we know so little, but I do not doubt that we have here a truth of profound significance.

Moreover, after the resurrection man will once more stand in his true relation to his fellow-man and to other intelligent beings. In the present state we meet one another, as those who look from behind barred doors and closed windows. We are all more or less strangers to each other. Our bodies confine and separate us. Our looks give the lie to our thoughts. We are not what we seem. The intercourse of even the best Christians is artificial and imperfect. But the resurrection body will be the perfect organ of the soul in the blessed fellowship of a holy society. By the resurrection body we shall likewise be brought into the right relation with nature. Man was created for dominion over the world. But sin has introduced discord and disorder. The creation itself has, through man's wrong-doing, been subjected to vanity, even to the "bondage of corruption." It groans and travails together in pain. Man is only in part its master; he is by turns its tyrant and its slave. But the creation is to be delivered from its bondage and to participate in the "liberty of the glory of the children of God." The redemption of our body is to be the redemption of nature (Rom. viii. 19-23). Through man nature is to be brought back into its right relation to God and His kingdom; man will be her high-priest, to voice her praises to her Maker. Through the new organism men will be able to exercise the God-given control over nature, of which an anticipation and pledge was given in the miracles, those "powers of the age to come."

I have spoken only of the resurrection of believers. But the Bible does not confine the great physical event to this class alone. Even in the Old Testament it is predicted, with reference to both good and bad: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2). The Saviour said that all that were in the tombs should hear his voice and come forth, "they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment" (John v. 29). Paul, giving solemn utterance to his faith before the Roman governor Felix, declared that there shall be "a resurrection both of the just and the unjust" (Acts xxiv. 15). In view of these plain utterances we cannot assert that only believers are to share in the resurrection. On the contrary, this effect of Christ's redemptive work is universal. "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22). That there are difficulties in this fact I cannot deny. I do not understand why the unbelieving should receive a gift that can only bring to them "shame and everlasting contempt." But I am not disposed to make my feelings the standard of what God should do or not do in a matter of this sort. Let us receive the utterances of Christ and the inspired writers as they stand, and leave God to make it plain when we come to the realm of unclouded knowledge.

This is only a part of that larger and very dark problem of retribution which we can not now discuss. But whatever the resurrection may mean for the ungodly, for the children of God, who will by it attain the full estate of sonship (Rom. viii. 19-23), it will be a glorious deliverance from death and introduction into the highest blessedness of the life eternal. It should ever be the object of earnest longing and eager hope. Like Paul, we should pray that we may know Christ and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed

unto his death; if by any means we may attain unto the resurrection from the dead (Phil. iii. 10, 11).

3. The third of the great events which are to signalize the last day is the final judgment. The judgments of the Old Testament are temporal and not eternal. It is only in prophecy that we discover intimations of the judgment of the last day, which has to do with the issues of eternity, and this in connection with great temporal dispensations of God's providence which are types of the great crisis which lies in the far future. But in the New Testament the doctrine of the judgment is fully and definitely taught. Our Saviour frequently refers to it. Commonly he speaks of the judgment of the last day (Matt. xi. 22, 24, xii. 36), of which he gives a detailed and dramatic description in his great eschatological discourse (Matt. xxv. 31-46). But in the discourses recorded in the Gospel of John he tells of a judgment which has already begun (John iii. 18, 19, xii. 31, xvi. 11). In one important utterance he represents the judgment as both present and future (John v. 22-29). The apostles reiterate the Saviour's teachings, dwelling especially upon the judgment of the last day, and teaching that Christ is to be the Judge. We will consider the more important elements of the New Testament teaching upon this solemn theme.

While the Scriptures lay the chief emphasis upon the judgment of the last day, yet they seem to afford reason for the distinction made by the older Protestant theologians between the particular and the general or last judgment. The particular judgment concerns the individual soul. It begins in the present life and reaches its definitive conclusion at death, when the period of probation is ended and the soul is assigned to its final destiny. The general judgment occurs on the last day. It is for men and angels. It will not decide destiny, but declare it and assign men to their final states. Of course, those who teach the continuation of judgment during the intermedi-

ate state will not accept this distinction. Yet all the drift of New Testament teaching is in the direction of it. The truth is, every man judges himself when he decides for or against Christ, and the Saviour only re-affirms this self-made judgment. Death, as the end of probation, gives it the character of finality, and the last day makes it known to the universe.

Christ is the Judge. It belongs to his mediatorial work and his prerogative as King of the kingdom of God. Men are to be judged by man; all judgment has been given to him because he is the Son of Man (John v. 27). This office is an essential element of the Saviour's glorification.

“The head that once was crowned with thorns
Is crowned with glory now.”

It follows that all judgment is Christian judgment. Paul does, it is true, give an exposition of judgment upon a basis of nature, showing that God will judge every man according to his works (Rom. ii. 1-16), but this is for the purpose of proving that God has placed all men upon a new basis of grace on the ground of Christ's atonement, and that the benefits of the Saviour's redemptive work are freely offered to all who will accept them. He makes the results of Christ's work co-extensive with the evils of the Fall (Rom. v. 12-21). We have therefore reason to believe that no man will be judged upon a basis of pure nature, but that all will receive the benefit of Christ's work. This is the ground of our hope in the salvation of those heathen who have not rejected the light God has given them. They will be judged according to Christ, and their potential and imperfect faith will for his sake be counted to them for righteousness. And as this principle of Christian judgment will inure to the benefit of all who have not known of Christ in this world, so it will enhance the condemnation of those who, having known of Christ, have rejected him.

The criterion of judgment is often represented in the New Testament as the deeds of the earthly life (2 Cor. v. 10; cf. Matt. xvi. 27; Gal. vi. 7-8; Rev. xx. 12, 13). At first sight this seems to contradict the other teachings of the New Testament, according to which men are saved by the pure unmerited grace of God on the ground of Christ's redemptive work and not by the merit of their own works. But a closer examination of the passages shows that works are not made the ground of salvation, but only the evidence of the man's moral character and state; they include his faith or unbelief and his whole attitude toward God and Christ. This is beautifully brought out in the Saviour's vivid portraiture of the scenes of the last day (Matt. xxv. 31-46). Those who for Christ's sake have fed and clothed and visited and helped his brethren are adjudged to have done all this to Christ himself. Those who failed to do it are regarded as having rejected Christ. The question is not of merit, but of character and act and relation to Christ. The ground of acceptance is, of course, not the works as meritorious good works, but the grace of Christ to which these works are due, and of the presence of which they are the evidence.

The last judgment is, as we have seen, general rather than particular. It is not needful that we should regard it as a great pageant, ordered after the model of human tribunals and their processes. We should also bear in mind what has been said about the application of our common measures of time to the last day. The peculiarity of the general judgment is that it is open and public, so that its processes and its results are known to all souls in God's universe. It is intended not so much for the decision of destiny as for the manifestation of it. Its great object is to vindicate the righteousness of the divine government as a government of grace through Jesus Christ. It will be the great *Theodiceë*. Then will the dark things in God's government be made light. Then will the secret things

be revealed. It will be shown beyond a peradventure that in all things the Judge of all the earth has done right. From the nature of the case this could not be shown during the course of human history. The imputation of unrighteousness has often rested upon God. Even His own children have often cherished a secret mistrust that there might be some partiality or inequality in His ways. But now, in the final outcome of things, it will be shown that the scales of justice hang even. Even that darkest and most inscrutable of all God's dealings, the final punishment of the ungodly, will be shown to be right. Even the wicked themselves will acknowledge it to be right, and go of their own accord, like Judas, to their own place. The devils will believe and tremble.

The revelations of individual human acts and character, which undoubtedly will be made in the last judgment, will not be arbitrary, but only such as will be needful to vindicate the righteousness of God's government. Hence it is not necessary to suppose that every trivial act will be exposed. The last judgment has often been presented in such a way as to render the thought of it shocking to every sensitive mind, as if then the universe was to be resolved into a great society for gossip and all unhallowed curiosity to be gratified. But God will not in the judgment forsake the infinite delicacy which belongs to Him as the Highest and the Holiest. We may be sure that where it is needful to raise the veil which covers the scars on His children's lives, He will do it with such tender love, that they will rejoice that they are able to give their testimony to His holy dealings; and where it is needful to expose the festering sin of the lost, it will be certainly done with infinite compassion. God will not taunt and expose to ridicule those whom He condemns.

With the last judgment the eternal age begins. It is the final scene in the long world age, the conclusion of human history in its earthly stage. It will be the con-

summation of the Saviour's glory. The kingdom of God will then be complete. All beings will be brought under the sway of God. The good will be triumphant the universe over. What evil remains will be brought into submission, absolute and final. In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 10, 11).

THE PRESENT DIRECTION OF THEOLOGICAL
THOUGHT IN THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES
OF THE UNITED STATES.

[A paper read before the International Congregational Council, in
London, July 15, 1891.]

THE PRESENT DIRECTION OF THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT IN THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES.

To understand the present tendencies of theology among our American Congregationalists, we must look backward. Our history has been marked by one great theological epoch, which began with Jonathan Edwards, and lasted, with inconsiderable intermissions, until past the middle of our own century. It was a period of intense theological activity and earnestness. The New England theology, born as it was in the "Great Awakening," and nourished by a remarkable series of revivals, was practical in its aims, and full of fire, of energy, of aggressive power.

The time, however, came when the religious life ebbed and the power of the New England theology declined. From the first it had its defects. The philosophical element in it had overshadowed the Scriptural and spiritual elements. It had been too exclusively concerned with the questions of scholastic Calvinism. The controversies to which it gave rise had turned the thoughts of the theologians away from the essential and central facts of Christianity. The preaching had grown abstract, dry, and powerless, and the people had become tired of it. In the reaction all theology fell into disrepute.

Other causes tended in the same direction. New problems of church work came to the front. The press outbid the pulpit in popularity. The great anti-Christian movement, which has been manifest throughout the whole domain of modern life and thought, made itself felt

among us. The philosophy and criticism of Germany, the new religious problems opened up by the theory of evolution, the agnostic philosophy, turned our thoughts from the niceties of the Calvinistic system to the defence of the foundations of religion itself.

Just when the change came it would be hard to say. But the new state of things became distinctly apparent after our civil war. Since then we have been passing through an untheological stage in our history. Doctrine has been undervalued. Our preaching has been practical rather than theoretical, ethical rather than theological. In the sphere of religious thought we have been concerned with the great theistic and apologetical questions which underlie Christianity rather than with the problems of Christian theology. It has seemed like fiddling while Rome was burning to discuss the moot points of the Christian system while the agnostic was triumphantly declaring that the arguments for the existence of a personal God have been overthrown, and the pantheist was claiming to have proved beyond a peradventure that revelation and miracle have no reality, except in the sense that makes all thought a revelation, and every common flower that blooms a miracle. But now, for some time past, it has been becoming increasingly evident that the time of our theological eclipse is drawing toward its close. The reaction against theology seems about to have lost its force. We have begun to see that our new conditions require not the abolition of theology, but its reconstruction. Our people, who grew so weary of a lifeless preaching of doctrine, are crying out for a true and living preaching of doctrine.

Moreover, the great philosophical and apologetical questions have been, to a considerable extent, settled. We no longer fear that the foundations will crumble beneath our feet. We have seen the scientific theory of evolution turned from an enemy to a friend of religion. We have

matched the agnostic and pantheistic philosophies by a theistic philosophy which is far better. We are readjusting our Christian evidences, not abandoning Paley and Butler, but supplementing them, giving especial prominence to the great central evidence from the believer's personal experience of Christ's redemption.

So we are once more taking possession of our theological inheritance. There is a revival of interest in the themes of Christian divinity. There can be no doubt that a new theological movement has begun. Already we have advanced far enough to be able to judge something of its nature.

This much of explanation has been needful to prepare the way for the proper subject of this paper—the present direction of theological thought among our American churches. To this I now apply myself. If much of what I say relates also to the larger movement in religious thought going on all over the Protestant world, it will not be strange. Still, our movement has its own distinctive features, and the subject will be presented from our point of view. If also my own personal equation must be taken into account, yet I trust my purpose to be an honest chronicler will be recognized.

The determining factors in our present thought are not new. They are the principles that belong to us as Protestant Christians and as American Congregationalists.

The substance of our theology is to be found now, as always, in the great unchanging facts and truths of Christianity accepted in every age of the church. They are clearly set forth in our Congregational Creed of 1883, which, although somewhat criticised by our conservative men as not sufficiently precise on two or three points of doctrine, has never been complained of by the other side, and so may certainly be regarded as expressing our minimum of belief.

We are also true to what is best in our American Con-

gregational traditions. We do not repudiate the New England theology, our glory in the past, but are trying to adapt it to the changed conditions in which we find ourselves. There are, of course, individuals who would ruthlessly break our continuity with the past. But the great body of us have no desire to adopt alien forms of thought. We have our strong centripetal tendencies, which balance our centrifugal forces. We do not wish to forget that we are the theological descendants of Robinson, Cotton, the Mathers, Edwards, Hopkins, Smalley, Dwight, Emmons, Griffin, Taylor, or, to come down to later times, of Edwards A. Park and Henry B. Smith. So, if we speak of a "new theology," we mean that it is new only as a living body is new at each fresh stage in its growth, conserving and fulfilling the one type that runs through all its changes, and that is neither old nor new.

Thus united to the Christian and our own denominational past, we are moving forward, as God gives us strength and wisdom, trying to work out a theology adapted to the needs of the stirring, restless age in which we live. Let us look now more closely at some of our present tendencies.

We mark, first, a movement toward a more spiritual conception of Christianity. It is a part of our birthright as Congregationalists to emphasize the reality and present power of the things unseen and eternal—the reigning Christ, the constant redemptive activity of the Holy Spirit, the invisible yet all powerful kingdom of God. But in our theology these facts have not been as clearly recognized as they should have been. We have been too prone to regard Christianity as a system of abstract truths and of remote historical facts. Notions and propositions have been more to us than the great spiritual realities for which they stand, the sacred events of nineteen hundred years ago more than the redemptive facts of to-day.

But we are beginning to give the spiritual element in Christianity its due place. We do not ignore the divine truths and sacred history which constitute the revelation once for all given to mankind. To do this would be to cut the foundations away from under Christianity. But we see, as never before, that Christianity is far more than a revelation; that it is a great system of redemptive agencies, at work here and now, by which God is building up his kingdom in the world.

We are coming to understand that it is this recognition of the invincible reality of spiritual Christianity which is going to give our theology its great power in the future. This is the ground of our own deepest convictions of the truth of the Christian system. Criticism may assail the historical facts of revelation; rationalism may urge objections to its doctrines; but the surf on our coast of Maine might as easily overthrow the granite cliffs against which it breaks as criticism and rationalism disturb the Christian realities which stand firm in the experience of the individual believer and the church. And so in dealing with those outside. Our age is intensely realistic. It demands facts. It bases its philosophy, its science, its practice, upon experience. If we can show it that there are spiritual facts just as real as the facts of the natural world, and spiritual experience as certain as physical experience, we gain enormous power over it. Our theologians in their teaching, and our ministers in their preaching, are more and more recognizing this secret of our power.

Another sign of the times, indicative of the direction of theological thought in our churches, is the renewed study of the Bible. One of the most encouraging features of the theological interregnum through which we have passed has been the fact that our ministers and Christian people have been going back to the sacred volume in a spirit of earnest and prayerful seeking after divine truth. Never in our history has there been more thorough, intel-

ligent, and devout investigation of the Scripture. Here also we are faithful to our principles as Congregationalists. We bate no jot of loyalty to the Bible. It is to us, no less than to our fathers, the inspired record of revelation, the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, the great means of grace by which we are brought into contact with the spiritual realities of God's kingdom, and by which the church of Christ is maintained and edified. We draw our theology from it. We look to it to correct the onesidedness and error of our imperfect Christian experience. The theological thought of our times aims to return to the Bible, and to draw fresh draughts from its fountain of life and truth.

We do not, however, regard the Bible precisely as our ancestors did. We distinguish the revelation from its record. We recognize the diversity of the books that compose it, and the progress of the revelation they describe. We discriminate between its different types of doctrine. The old piecemeal method of dealing with it, which regarded each verse as complete in itself, without reference to the context or the book in which it is found, has fallen into well-merited desuetude.

We are trying to deal fairly and fully with the facts brought to light by modern biblical criticism. I think there are few among us disposed to ignore these facts, as there are few who would construe them in the interests of unbelief. To the great body of our thinking men it is not a question whether the Bible is inspired—that all believe—but how the doctrine of inspiration shall be stated so as to express the whole truth. And we are coming more clearly to understand the great purpose of the Bible—namely, to bring the church and the individual in all ages into vital contact with the historic facts, the divine truth, and the spiritual power of Christianity; and so to discern what is essential and what non-essential for the attainment of that purpose. We are most of us ready to admit that

false standards have been set up, that an infallibility in non-essentials has been demanded which the Bible never claims, and which, if it existed, would render it less fitted for its end. We are beginning to see that we may grant that the sacred writers were not scientific historians, not philosophers or men of science, not experts in the methods of scientific exegesis or of literary criticism, and yet may rest firm in our conviction that they were so directed by the supernatural influence of God's Spirit as to give us the perfect rule of faith and life.

A more serious problem confronts us in the facts and theories of the Higher Criticism. But here also we are trying to deal honestly with the facts. There is no one of our evangelical denominations in America more earnestly seeking for light on this important range of subjects than our own. We do not want to settle the questions thus presented by prejudice, or clamor, or ecclesiastical authority, but by patient, scholarly, reverent investigation. That the Old Testament, to which our Divine Lord appealed in all his teachings, will ever be shown to be anything but a supernatural and inspired book, we do not believe. But we are sure we are acting in his spirit when we give a candid hearing to those who claim that our old theories of the modes and times of its composition were mistaken. Some of our ablest scholars have accepted, to a greater or less extent, the new views. But our ministers and intelligent laymen, who form the jury that must ultimately decide the case, are more cautious, hesitating to give their verdict in a matter of such great importance till they are sure that all the facts are before them.

And while we wait for the result we rest more strongly than ever upon the proof of the divinity and truth of the Bible furnished by the experience of its redemptive power, the old *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*, which is ours by virtue of our Protestant descent.

Again, we are coming more distinctly to recognize the central place of the living Christ in our theological thought. It goes without saying that he is supreme in the Christian life. Our early Congregationalism went beyond all other systems in asserting his supremacy in the rule of his people and the world. But in our preaching and our theology other elements of Christianity have too often usurped his place, or a doctrine about him has been substituted for the Christ himself, or his prophetic and priestly offices have overshadowed his kingly.

We are, however, becoming more sensible of the fact that as the power of Christianity is concentrated in the living Christ, our King, our Redeemer; so he is to be the great theme of our preaching, the central and organizing fact of our theology. We teach no new doctrine respecting him. Our great Unitarian controversy settled once for all the question of our orthodoxy. The modern pantheism, which preserves the Christian phraseology, but really deprives it of meaning, has little if any currency among us. The Christian positiveness which reduces Christ's divinity to his moral solidarity with God, has not met with favor. We have received helpful impulses from modern German speculations respecting the Incarnation, the *kenosis*, and the need of Christ's perfecting work apart from the fact of sin. But we are less disposed than of old to speculate upon these high subjects, more willing to admit the mystery. It is the Christ himself, in all his living, saving power, upon whom our thought is concentrated, whom we strive to hold up to men, and in whom we find the key to all the problems of religious thought.

The way is thus being opened for a larger and richer conception of God. The old theology, in dealing with this subject, looked too much to philosophy, too little to Christianity. But we are trying to "Christologize" our doctrine of God, to set Him forth as He is seen in the face

of Jesus Christ. It is often said among us that we are coming to a more ethical conception of God. This is true. But it is more ethical because it is more Christian, because it is not of the God of Nature, but of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also said that we have corrected the old view of God which emphasized His transcendence at the expense of His immanence, by giving due place to the latter element: This is likewise true. But we have not learned the lesson from pantheism, as some would claim, but from our fuller and truer conception of Christianity. It is the unchristologized view of God that unduly emphasizes His transcendence. It is the view of God through Christ the Mediator which gives the other element in its proper relation to the whole truth. It is in Christ and the Holy Spirit that God comes near to us and dwells in us, and it is through this wonderful fact that we learn the reality of God's indwelling in man and Nature apart from redemption. And thus also the way is opened for a far deeper and truer understanding of the great Christian truth of the Trinity.

As we are learning to Christologize the doctrine of God, so we are learning to do the same by the doctrines of the eternal plan, of creation, and of providence—especially the doctrine of the plan. Once, like Milton's fallen angels, our New England theologians

“reasoned high

Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end in wandering mazes lost.”

Tired out by the vain effort we have come to Christ, and seek in him the solution of the mystery of decrees and election, sovereignty and free will. If it be Calvinistic to place God above man, to believe that the destiny of the universe is in His hands, to hold that sin exists by His permissive decree and not in His despite, to maintain that

in the initiation and progress of the Christian life all is of grace, then, I suppose, the greater number of us are Calvinists. But our controversies on the philosophical aspects of these subjects are over, and differing opinions respecting them do not separate brethren or furnish tests of fellowship.

In similar language we may speak of our doctrine of sin. We are trying to view it in the light of its relation to Christ and his redemption. We are thus kept from yielding to the temptation so strongly pressed upon us by the prevalent popular philosophies, to make light of sin. The Puritan conscience is not dulled but quickened by our present theological tendencies. But the scholastic questions respecting sin, once uppermost in our discussions, have lost their old importance. Immediate and mediate imputation, original sin, the moral status of new-born infants, are not the subjects which occupy our thought, but the awful fact of sin itself. To bring to bear Christ's redemption to overcome it—this is what seems to us most important; and the theology that will do this best seems to us the best theology, even though it may not solve every theoretical problem respecting the nature of sin.

We maintain no less strongly than of old the absolute necessity of this redemption as supernatural and divine. We are learning that it can be made effectual not only to save the individual, but to renovate society. Our ministers are giving themselves eagerly to the study of sociology, that they may apply the Christian solution to its problems. In our doctrine of redemption, while we are exalting the kingly office of Christ, it is not at the expense of his other offices. We hold as firmly as ever to his atoning work. The change with respect to it is not in the way of a weakening grasp upon the fact, but of an increasing willingness to admit the imperfections of the theories by which we strive to account for the fact. It is

a common saying among us that the atonement is too large to be held in the mould of any single theory. Yet I think that most of us give it a Godward, as well as a manward, efficacy. One of the brightest jewels in our Congregational crown is the memory of Horace Bushnell ; but our best thought would not admit, unless I am much mistaken, that this brilliant and spiritual theologian said the last word on this high theme. What is called the Catholic doctrine of the Atonement, namely, that Christ's death was in some true sense the objective ground of the forgiveness of sin, still commends itself to the larger number of our Christian people.

The whole drift of modern thought, and the pressure of the movement I have tried to describe, have been concentrated upon the problems of eschatology. The conflict of soul upon these subjects through which we have passed has been no less intense, because we have known that it was not peculiar to us. The old Calvinism, which our fathers loyally accepted, left a part of mankind wholly out of reach of Christ's redemptive grace. When the New England theology broke the iron ring of this consistent and logical system by the adoption of the doctrine of a universal atonement, it was inevitable that new questions should arise.

During the last decade we have been discussing, as the world pretty well knows, the relation of the heathen to God's grace in Christ. The old view, which prevailed during the last century, and had many advocates until quite recent times, doomed the heathen as a mass to perdition. This severe doctrine has been generally abandoned. Our discussions have not been upon this point, but upon the question as to the manner and grounds of the salvation of those heathen who are saved. The common view has been that their imperfect faith, based upon their natural knowledge of God and such elements of truth as are to be found in their corrupt religions, is reckoned to them

for righteousness for the sake of Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all, and that so their eternal destiny is settled on the basis of the decisions of this life. The able and devoted teachers in our beloved mother theological seminary at Andover have urged the other view, common in Germany, that an opportunity is granted the heathen in the other life, between death and the judgment, to hear the Gospel and accept or reject Christ. I do not propose to enter into the merits of our controversy. So far as it has involved unchristian bitterness, we are ashamed of it. We are hard fighters on our side of the water, and both parties have dealt heavy blows. The result of the discussion has been to emphasize the silence of the Scriptures on the subject. The majority still hold the older view, because it seems to us more in accord with the general drift of the Scripture and the principles of our New England theology. But there is an increasing willingness to admit that our speculations cannot exhaust the possibilities of God's redemptive grace, and that a point of this sort can never permanently be made a test of orthodoxy.

The much more difficult question of future punishment has not been the subject of important controversy among us. But it has profoundly affected us. Our deeper conception of Christianity, our enlarged view of the infinite love and mercy of God, our stronger realization of the power of Christ's redemption, have united to give this subject a peculiar painfulness and solemnity. It has pressed not only upon our theologians, but upon all our thoughtful men and women. It is a subject of peculiar difficulty to many of our most promising students of divinity. Some among us find relief in the theories of the "larger hope" and "conditional immortality." If the greater number continue to hold in substance the immemorial doctrine of the Christian church, it is because we cannot convince ourselves that the words of Christ and his Apostles, fairly interpreted, sanction any other view.

It is with us a matter of loyalty to our Master, whose word is our final authority. Our difficulties and perplexities we cast on him, and leave him to show us at the Last Day how this awful fact is consonant with love and justice.

Such is the present direction of theological thought among us, so far as I am able to understand it, and, in the brief time allotted me, to describe it. The outlook is one of hopefulness. Our faces are toward the light. As we are striving for more of the power of Christ in our life, so we are striving for more of the truth of Christ in our Christian thought. And we believe that we shall attain it steadily as the years advance, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

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[The indices were prepared by the author's colleague and valued friend,
Professor Francis B. Denio.—ED.]

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